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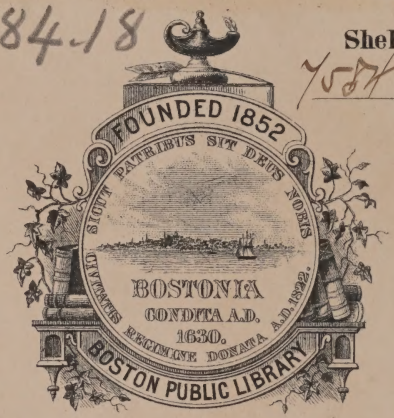

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NORTHERN PRESBYTER'S

SECOND LETTER

TO

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL

OF

ALL DENOMINATIONS

ON

SLAVERY.

BY

NATHAN LORD,
PRESIDENT OF DARTMOUTH COLLEGE.

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LETTER.

A Northern Presbyter addresses this second letter to his brethren, of all denominations, on slavery. His former letter appears not to have been generally acceptable. It has been sharply criticized in many religious and secular journals. A leading representative *Quarterly* — The New Englander — calls down upon the writer the censure of the church, and, subsequently, undertakes to set forth, at large, his alleged errors, and raise the note of warning against their pernicious influence. Presbyter proposes in these pages to justify what he has before written. He presumes to question the wisdom of his reviewers; and hopes to substantiate, by additional reasonings, his original positions. Whether what he now writes will be more convincing or acceptable, he has no concern to inquire. It is in his mind to write it, and he leaves it to produce whatever results it may please an infinitely wise Providence to appoint.

Presbyter's former letter was written in a full knowl-

edge of what the NEW ENGLANDER and other journals have since published in reproof of it. It was undertaken for the purpose of suggesting the invalidity of those popular methods of reasoning on the subject in question, which those respectable periodicals represent, and of allaying the dangerous agitations which they have contributed to produce. It was designed to encourage a more legitimate method of discussion, by turning inquirers from the accidents and contingents of slavery, which occasion such irreconcilable diversities of opinion among wise and good men, and inflame the passions of the generality, to its elementary principles, its providential design, and its comprehensive bearings and relations in respect to the moral government of God. The question of slavery, especially as it concerns ministers of the Gospel, is simply ethical and theological. It must be tried, therefore, by a Divine standard, and not at the bar of an imaginative philosophy, or a sentimental philanthropy; not on the political arena, nor by vote of popular assemblies, or the conceits of fiction and romance. The letter proposed that authoritative test. "To the law and to the testimony."

It is no answer, then, merely to reproduce, in similar or different forms, the same arguments or methods whose unsoundness and fallaciousness had been condemned. Nothing is settled by merely evading the criterion which Presbyter propounds, and

ringing changes upon the exhausted topics of anti-slavery literature which that criterion reproves. Such finesse might suffice for a temporary popular effect, but could serve no abiding purpose of truth or charity. It is unworthy of the subject, and the occasion. Presbyter takes the question of slavery from its accidents to its principles, and discusses it accordingly. He must be met, therefore, on his own ground, or, whether right or wrong, his letter is not answered; and all avoidance of its issues, or stale repetitions of contrary theories and interpretations, are a virtual acknowledgment of its correctness. Wherefore, the criticisms of the NEW ENGLANDER, and others like them, because they are thus evasive, need no refutation, but a reference to the letter itself. Yet it may be of consequence to show, more particularly, and in detail, wherein they reach not their mark; and to lay open the sophistry which is intended to give them the appearance and effect of a reply.

In this pamphlet, Presbyter will confine himself especially to his reviewer in the NEW ENGLANDER. That ardent writer is a fit representative of his class. From one all may be known: for, though they exhibit different degrees of learning and ingenuity, they use the same materials, and after the same fashion. There could, indeed, be but little difference between them in these respects; for the fountain of their new philosophy is not deep, and a single channel

suffices to bear off its impetuous and noisy waters. The reviewer is one of the best specimens, and is accordingly so commended by his satisfied friends. He publishes by request. He is a writer of evident intelligence and Christian virtue, — well informed, earnest, sincere, resolved. He condemns his adversary, without stint, and agreeably to his honest convictions, for alleged intellectual blindness and moral delinquency. He pities him, as is kind, in his consequent state of degradation; and does what he can to abridge his pernicious influence. Yet he does not quite abandon him as a reprobate; and would give him over to public censure, and official destruction, only for the sake of his ultimate repentance and salvation. Presbyter would take no exception to him, in these respects; for every writer should be suffered to free himself agreeably to his own sensibilities and tastes. His ideas, and not his temperament, or his rhetoric, alone concern the question at issue. All that is now proposed is to show wherein his argument is nothing to his purpose; and to elucidate more fully the principles which he so imperfectly comprehends, and so ineffectually disputes. Indeed, but for this latter purpose, namely, the fuller development and exposition of the principles embodied in his first letter, Presbyter would not have thought it material to invite his brethren to the perusal of a second. — The logical order, both of the letter and the

review, will be followed, as far as it may seem of consequence to pursue the subject.

I. The Question.

The letter of Presbyter first calls the attention of its readers to the question of *the Divine right* of slavery. He uses the term according to its proper scientific import, — as the denominator of a state of bondage in which one man becomes, by law, the property of another man, and subject to the master's will. The definition is implied, expressed, and kept up throughout the letter, and is continually guarded as simply and alone descriptive of the stated relation subsisting between the parties. The one owns, the other is owned, according to law so made and provided. It presupposes an authority of the State, under God, to institute the relation, and to regulate it, agreeably to its natural intention and design. The master becomes, by law, sole proprietor, and the slave a chattel personal, in distinction from a chattel material, which implies, from necessity of the case, that their respective moral and spiritual relations are undisturbed, and that both master and slave are brought together in peculiar and distinctive relations, as well to God as to each other; and are held to answer for the performance of their respective duties to him as the sovereign proprietor and ruler of all. But the slave is the master's money. No man but the master has a right to his person, or his services; and he has

no right to withhold service from the master, or alienate it to another man. He is subject to his master's will alone; but both parties are under law to God, and to God's minister — the State.

The question is whether this relation is right or wrong; and it is independent of the moral character of the master, or the slave, and distinct from it. One or the other, or both, may be bad men, in any sense of the term; but that affects not the nature, intention, or design of the relation which is constituted between them. Slavery is a variety of government by which one man rules over another, and holds him subservient to his will, as his lawful and proper possession, subject to the ordinances of God, and of the State. The question is not whether this species of property may be acquired rightfully by mere rapine, fraud, or stealth, or used for nefarious purposes, or regulated by tyrannical and oppressive laws, — for that question would be absurd, — but whether God forbids it to be acquired, held, or used at all; that is, whether it is prohibited in Scripture; or, whether, in the nature of the case, it is impossible for one man so to rule over another man without violating the principles of natural justice and benevolence? and whether States, or individual persons under their authority, in carrying on slavery at all, do certainly and necessarily sin against God?

These distinctions are perfectly obvious. Our

quick reviewer himself admits them. He could not do otherwise. He does more, as bound by his religious profession. He admits that if God has required or authorized one part of the human family to enslave another part, that constitutes a right, or duty, or both, as the case may be. This admission presupposes the absolute sovereignty of God over all his creatures, his infinite knowledge of their character, conditions, and wants, and his prerogative, as infinitely excellent in all respects, to carry on the affairs of the world so as best to subserve the ends of its present fallen, sinful, but reprieved and probationary state. It precludes all creatures from sitting in judgment upon the counsels of God, or questioning his decrees. It recognizes the first and fundamental principle of theology and ethics, without which right and wrong, in any actual sense, would be impossible, namely, a personal God and moral governor, in opposition to all atheism and mere naturalism; and it justifies the supreme authority of natural and revealed religion as the guide of life, inasmuch as there can be no higher will, or authority, or standard of right and wrong than the Divine will, and no appeal from it. The reviewer, as a minister of the Gospel, is aware that he must begin with the acknowledgment of this principle, or he has no foundation. Had he kept it distinctly before his mind, and held to it, consistently, in his subsequent writing, he would have come out in very different conclusions.

But our excited author, captivated by his idol of an inner light, a higher law, a godlike consciousness, — the imaginary self-divinity of the human nature, — and dazzled by his chimera of a divine and free humanity, when he begins to reason, immediately deserts the principle, and confounds the distinctions which he had acknowledged. He turns short away from the issue which Presbyter had proposed, and presents another, and a different issue which is nothing to his purpose. All his subsequent reasoning has respect only to that falsely substituted issue, and is mere legerdemain.

Thus: — the reviewer presents truly, that Presbyter proposes "to defend the institution (slavery) which exists in this country." But that is not the proposition which it is convenient for him to controvert, and he immediately qualifies it by an adjunct of his own, which makes it another, and a different proposition; namely, that it is the object of Presbyter to defend the institution which exists in this country, — *as it exists;* and not only so, but as it exists according to the reviewer's own onesided and distorted account of it. He argues not, as he ought, on the first and true, but, as he ought not, on the second and false presentment of the question. He makes that false presentment the entire and only ground of his whole criticism. Presbyter had not proposed to defend slavery, as it exists in this country, or as it ever

existed anywhere, on the whole, and much less as it exists in the morbid fancy of the reviewer; — just as he would not undertake to defend Nero, but government; the pope, but Christianity; administrators, but their institutions; accidents, but their substances; the abuses of a thing, but the thing itself. He insisted upon these fundamental distinctions, lest his incautious brethren, in their zeal against bad factors and agents, should assail an ordinance of God, and precipitate ruin when they intended only reformation. Bad masters there are, and bad laws, and bad customs at the South; and because of the manifold existing evils and irregularities growing out of the abuses of slavery, Presbyter himself insisted that the judgments of heaven were impending over the guilty nation, of which judgments not the least is the permitted madness of the abolitionists. He accepted not their exaggerated and absurd accounts of these existing evils. He rebuked their false statements, their intemperate crusade whose natural effect would be a civil and servile war, their wild romance of a new but *nondescript* reconstruction of the State upon the hitherto undefined, and forever indefinable, and incomprehensible ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, in any merely natural conditions of the earth and man. But great abuses were admitted; not as reasons for subverting foundations laid, as Presbyter affirmed, by the providence of God, but for building

upon them a superstructure more conformable to his will, and more subservient to his designs. All this the reviewer studiously evades. He presents Presbyter, invidiously, as the defender and patron, not of an institution, which, on his own admission, ought to be patronized if it be an ordinance of God, but of the abuses of that institution whose Divine origin is the very question in dispute. He should have met that question on the grounds suggested by Presbyter — the only grounds where a true decision can be had, — instead of diverting the attention of his readers, as he has done, by a mere logical finesse. Yet Presbyter believes him not to have intended an artifice. He was merely bewildered by the excitement of his chimerical ideas. There are intoxications besides that of strong drink, and far more dangerous, in which men sometimes see double, and seem to themselves to hit the substance when they strike only at the spectre.

Presbyter proposed that slavery may be from God, because of its analogy, in many respects, to other varieties of rule and government over the fallen world, which are admitted to have had their origin in him. He claimed that Christian ministers ought to inquire diligently into these probabilities, and all other sources of evidence in natural and revealed religion, lest, instead of being guides and conservators, they should inconsiderately become

agitators of society. He argued that we are not competent to determine, *a priori*, nor at all by our unassisted faculties, and least of all, by our mere instincts, or by random hypotheses and speculations, how such a world as this should be carried on. We must ask at the oracles. We must take our impressions, not from caricatures, but originals; and decide, not passionately, but in the sobriety of calm research. Previously to such inquiry, or independently of it, to criticize slavery, or any other analogous institution, by our imperfect ideas, onesided observations, or undigested and untried theories; to accept the accounts of heated reformers, or selfish politicians; or even to follow the impulse of more generous but undisciplined sensibilities, is unreasonable and unsafe. It is unworthy of Christian men, religious teachers, and the leaders of God's people. There is too much at stake. Yet that is the course of our excellent reviewer, and of his school in general. He describes slavery as bad at any rate, a system of mere oppressions and cruelties; and his adversaries as demoralized men claiming the Divine authority for an institution unquestionably the sum of all villanies and abominations. One is amazed that a minister of the Gospel should condescend to argue with any persons who, in his judgment, are, intellectually, so blind, and, morally, so perverse. But he has done it; and it is therefore pertinent to analyze his reasonings.

II. The Argument.—1. *From Natural Religion.* If, by natural religion were intended nothing more than our reviewer seems to have contemplated, namely, the view which the mind takes of our relations and duties to God from a study of the works of nature, it would indeed be questionable whether slavery, or any other institution of social life, would stand the test of its criticism; or rather, whether there would then be any criticism, or any social state at all. The mere deductions and inferences of our unassisted minds from such partial observations as even the most cultivated, with their natural depraved biases, would be likely to take of the system of the world, would be of very little value as a guide of life. In respect to the ignorant and besotted, who, in all periods, have constituted the generality, they would be worse than useless. Consequently, the wise and foolish, by different roads, would meet, at length, in the same abyss of confusions, discords, and destructions,—as Paul has shown. God has never so left the world absolutely, to itself: but so far as he has done it, the demonstration of man's incompetency has been complete. There is no historical evidence, from any age or nation, that society could establish itself in virtue and prosperity by the teachings even of induction and experience; and, as to the mere instincts, or the speculative faculties, there is still less reason to believe that it could be carried on at all by

such infantile or fantastic administrations. Man's sufficiency for self-knowledge, self-government, or self-salvation, is a brilliant phantom; but it figures only in the reveries of the philosopher, the declamations of the politician, the more questionable lucubrations of the speculative theologian, or the romantic dreams of children in general. It abides no practical test whatever. Apart from prophecy we could not reason to a perfected state of the earth, or man, from any data of history or experience; and the Scripture refers such a predicted state only to supernatural power. In actual life it soon vanishes into thin air.

The problem of our relations and duties to God which reason would not have been likely even to originate, and certainly could never have solved, has its origin and solution in the express teachings of God himself. They are embodied in natural and revealed religion. Natural religion, equally with revealed, is taught of God. It is not nature's teachings concerning God, but God's teachings concerning nature, by which He binds the universe to himself; and this order it is infinitely dangerous to invert. Natural religion is not our instinct, or judgment, or fancy, nor our wishes or interpretations concerning our relations and duties to God and to each other; for that would be to invest humanity with the attributes of Divinity, and to nullify the Godhead. But it is

God's authoritative instruction to us as his creatures, and the subjects of his government, during our natural state of life and society, in this probationary period of our being. Man originates it not, but God dispenses it. God, who made the world, gives it the law — which, however, man refuses and disobeys. God dispenses, and man obscures and perverts it. Man declines to brutishness except as God raises him; and the ignorance and wickedness of the world are both cause and consequence of man's unwillingness to be raised. It is as true of natural religion as of revealed, — "This is the condemnation that light has come into the world, and they have loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." The light of all dispensations, is a mere instance of the Divine benignity and mercy, for the benefit of the otherwise hopelessly alienated and lost. God's communications are not the supplement or complement of man's discoveries, — mere helps to our original and self-moved inquiries, — by which God rewards and satisfies our antecedent desire and pursuit of knowledge and virtue; but they constitute all the true knowledge we possess, which, however, we like not to retain; or we retain it in our memory but to pervert it in our judgment and affections, and dishonor it in our practice, holding the truth of God in unrighteousness, till we "are given over to strong delusion to believe a lie." Great are the confusions of

the world from turning these matters round about, and putting the Divinity in leading strings to humanity, till, insensibly, we make our conceits interpreters of the Divine Wisdom, and measure the vast and incomprehensible scheme of providence by our infinitely low ideas. Probably these confusions were never greater than at present; nor, in respect to any subject, than the question now in hand. And they are likely to be worse confounded in the senseless unhingeings and disintegrations of society.

Agreeably to these views which have stood in the judgment of all truly learned and pious antiquity, we hold to natural religion, not as a human, but a Divine institution; not as a product of the human faculties likely or possible to have been reasoned out by man, but of God's Spirit who first moved over the physical chaos and said, — "Let there be light!" It is a revelation, but oral and traditional, in distinction from a written revelation, dispensed, in successive periods, according to the exigencies of society, to men called and appointed of God, as his servants, to be the teachers and guides of mankind in general. It is God's own account of his mode of governing the world, and his rule for the subordinate government of it by his authorized servants, handed down through successive generations, till it was at length incorporated and republished, with overt formalities and miraculous attestations, in the holy Scriptures.

It existed before the Scriptures, but was inserted in them, and is proved by them. The Scriptures, except so far as they are merely emblematical, or historical of the distinctive work of Christ, or political for the Jewish nation, consist but of a more full edition and enforcement of the earlier oral revelations given for the personal and social regulation of the fallen world. The peculiar work of Christ recognizes them, is built upon them, and is consistent with them. The doctrines and precepts of Christianity all affirm them, and require us to live in agreement with them. Any refusal of them, or any rationalistic interpretation, as if they were superseded by the Gospel, or the Gospel were superseded by the new lights of a more advanced age, would put the several related parts of the Divine economy out of harmony with each other. It would virtually nullify them all; and the practical effect would be a general disturbance and disorganization of society. Christianity then only accomplishes its intended work of ameliorating the condition of mankind, when, for Christ's sake, his promised Spirit renews the minds of individual persons, and thus diffuses the heavenly life through the constituted orders and relations of natural society. Christianity intermeddles not with any natural institutions. It proposes no change of social organizations. It leaves them as God ordained them under the natural law; but to be interpenetrated by his Spirit, and carried

on conformably to their natural and constitutional design till "The times of restitution," when the whole fallen scene shall be supernaturally reconstructed, and "The kingdom of God" shall come.

Very instructive it is to observe how, in respect to the question here under review, natural religion falls into the current of Scripture, and the Scripture casts its light back upon natural religion, and both illustrate the comprehensive scheme of God's natural and moral providence. By the natural law of wickedness the discords and irregularities of earth tend constantly to increase and multiply, and to issue, as in material natures, in a series of destructions and new creations. The power of evil in individual minds accumulates, and the consequent disturbances of the social state become more aggravated, till, without restraints, premature and universal catastrophe would ensue. God speaks the word, — for his rainbow is painted on the cloud, — and says to the proud swelling waves: "Thus far shall ye go, but no further." He interposes *governments*, to sustain the feeble, to check the unruly, to punish transgressors, to destroy the incorrigibly wicked, to make such examples of the evil of sin, and of his displeasure against it, that men may see and be afraid, and that the distracted world may not die before its time. The most comprehensive form of delegated government, and, according to nature, the most authoritative, is the

State; and the State is God's minister, bearing not the sword in vain.

But the world, revolted as it is from the Creator, makes very difficult work for the subordinate governments of earth. The difficulty is increased by the imperfection and malfeasance of public officers, who sometimes abuse their power till the whole distracted scene winds up in revolution, and a new dynasty appears. But dynasties must exist; for the world, and every State, like every particular man, have their respective periods, and, in a state of anarchy, would prematurely die. For the more effectual regulation of society every State is obliged to make various distribution of its powers. Tribes, hordes, states, races, sometimes fall off to such low degrees of ignorance, barbarism, and licentiousness, as to require great vigilance and severe authority from the more intelligent and civilized, lest they should become self-destructive, or injurious to neighboring States, or precipitate general confusion throughout the world. Civilized communities are driven to various expedients to forestall, diminish, or alleviate these necessary evils. One of these providential expedients, as old as society itself, and an accredited element in its government from the beginning, is *domestic slavery*, — sign of a bad world, yet necessary to keep it from worse conditions; — badly enough administered, at best and sometimes past endurance, yet, better, on the whole,

than would be the absence of it, in the existing state of society at large.

Domestic slavery breaks up the power of undisciplined and barbarous hordes, and prevents their destructive combinations. It multiplies, indefinitely, the officers of government, distributes them over the greatest surface, and diffuses the benefits of restraint and discipline among large numbers of the ignorant and besotted who could not be reached conveniently, or at all, by the central power, or its provincial deputies. It places under the control of the more intelligent and thrifty families, imbecile or disorderly persons who would otherwise roam unlicensed, and trains them up to a higher capacity and privilege than they could otherwise, by any possibility, attain. It does this with the least possible expense, and with the advantage of enlisting the humane sympathies and prudential interests of masters for elevating the otherwise incapable to a higher appreciation of civilized life, and corresponding efforts to obtain a fitness for more dignified conditions. Society in general is thus preserved from premature catastrophes, approximates more nearly to as high a condition of liberty, intelligence, thrift, and happiness as could be supposed possible in any merely natural state of the fallen world. There is nothing conceivable in the institution itself, apart from the character of the parties connected with it, — in which respect it stands on a

simple equality with all other institutions of earth, — that is not fitted, as things are, to diminish necessary evils, and secure the otherwise improbable or impossible benefits of a probationary state.

If this account of domestic slavery be called theoretical, it has at least the merit of being strictly justified by the well-known character of mankind, and of having been acted upon by the constituted guides and guardians of society, since the children of the first murderer interfered with the children of the first righteous man. It has the greater merit of being republished in the first written statutes of the Almighty, and inwrought into the Mosaic code, — a rule for God's chosen people who accordingly subjugated, bought, and sold the barbarians round about them, and made them hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and altars of the Lord. The New Testament, equally with the Old, recognizes the natural institution, reflects its peculiar light back upon it, and confirms it as a natural ordinance of God. It stands thus in the Divine counsels as well ascertained and settled, in its own order, as any other natural institution for the well-being of mankind, and must stand against all the spurious wisdom of a conceited and bewildered generation. To contend against it is to contend against the government of God, and put in jeopardy the social interests of the world.

It is out of question that slavery presupposes and implies the sadly depraved character of mankind. That, however, is not the fault of the institution, but of the corrupted race. It is equally out of question that it has been made an occasion of the greatest crimes, — which, however, equally proves only the criminality of its depraved administrators in prostituting the Divine ordinance to their own lusts. Slavery is adapted and appointed to other ends. It is as likely to be useful, in its own natural order, in the actual state of things, as other varieties of government, in their respective orders, administered by imperfect and sinful men. It is so in fact. History makes it experimentally evident, that, in the worst periods of society, as there have been some righteous fathers, and some righteous magistrates, so there have been some righteous masters, and their good conduct has contributed to prolong the continuance of the body politic. Society, in all periods, consists of a mixture of good and bad men; and the same interior principle of goodness, whether the natural goodness of humane affection, or the higher and saving virtue of supernatural grace, that has made some men benefactors in one relation, has also made them benefactors in other relations, and they have so far held society together, — "The salt of the earth, and the light of the world." From the times of the patriarchs till now, the good and bad

administrations of slavery have been in fair proportion to those of other related institutions of social life; and have a similar justification in the unperverted conscience of mankind. Badly as slavery has been carried on in these last days, and in our own country, it has actually, in no small degree, answered its righteous and benevolent design. Its moral statistics, in comparison with those of African barbarians on their native deserts, or of the emancipated among the civilized nations, are demonstrative of its beneficial influence, on the whole, and its subserviency to the all-wise purposes of God. They are sufficient to relieve a serious and impartial mind, in respect to the many real or seeming evils that necessarily attend it. The whole natural condition of slaves, in every part of the world, in respect to food, clothing, shelter, health, safety, and the means of physical happiness in general, is far superior to that of any undisciplined negroes on the earth; and, in respect to religious knowledge and moral culture, there is no comparison. That this condition is no better is, of course, a shame to the Christian nations. But that the righteous judgment of heaven in the institution itself, and in the conduct of it, has been tempered with so much mercy, and has, to some considerable extent, through the influence of good and patriotic men, answered its natural design, is a striking instance of the wisdom and goodness of God. If any, in the

wildness of their romantic zeal, would subvert and abolish it, as things still are, and project their schemes of revolution in accordance with their visionary ideas, they are not likely to be checked by any such reference as is here made to the principles of the Divine government, the records of history, or the warnings of experience. Nothing can overcome a vain conceit. But no reasonable man would choose to live when and where their experiment should be made.

To views like these, which have been professed by the church of God in general, in all the ages,—except when it has been infected, as at present, by a more illuminated philosophy,*—and by which it has, with

* The anti-slavery excitements of past ages of the church, as referred to by the reviewer, are not properly exceptions to the views above expressed. They were in general produced, not by speculative theories of liberty and equality, but by the natural revolt of Christian and humane principles against wanton abuses of the slaveholding power; and they contemplated not the overthrow of slavery, but its reform; not a general jail-delivery, but such occasional and local emancipations as might consist with the safety of the State. They indicated the practical working of the great Christian paradox of 'mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace embracing each other,' and not the fanatical phrensy of the new era. The Church, as represented by the men of sound religion and morality, has never been, to any considerable extent, intoxicated by enthusiastic and radical ideas; nor has it committed the honor of Christ to the keeping of visionary reformers, or intriguing politicians. That phenomenon belongs especially to our present period; and yet, now, not to the church general, but the church sectional. It is geographical. The boundary between right and wrong, in this respect, can be traced on the map:—a

a characteristic loyalty, sustained the institutions of natural religion, our excited reviewer, under the common illusions of his class, condescends to give no attention. He simply turns them off, with an affected indifference, as being "mere vague conjecture without a particle of proof." They do not strike him. They have no meaning for him. He has been too busy with his sentimental novelties, and reformatory speculations, too zealous in his new crusade for a secular millennium, and for retaking Jerusalem before the time, to labor in this more fruitful field of ethical and theological inquiry. He would even think it profane to turn away his mind from the bright vision of a golden age of universal emancipation, to pursuits so antiquated, and so cramping to his new affection. He has chosen a different method.

Let it be observed more particularly.

It is not to be doubted that our excellent reviewer, principled as he professes to be, in the belief of the sinful character of mankind, would admit what has been said above of the bad tendencies of society in general, if it were said in connection with any other subject. But, in respect to this stirring theme which has so filled

convenient way of making moral distinctions, but not absolutely true; — for on this side of Mason and Dixon's line, there are seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the Baal of any political idolatry. They are men, too, of no small stature, whose power, though not greatly felt at the ballot-box, will be acknowledged in heaven; for whose sake, popular catastrophes, though not averted, may be deferred and shortened.

and fired his lively imagination, he forgets, or practically ignores it, and reasons on the same line with men whose opinions on other subjects he condemns, and whose moral and social influence he would oppose. He places himself, unwittingly, in the worst possible connections, and gives his sanction to a course of thinking which consistently terminates in a habit of general unbelief. In his honest zeal for a state of universal brotherhood, he appreciates not the present incapacity of the generality to enjoy such a blessing, or the perpetual impossibility of any such organization of society, without higher degrees of intelligence and virtue than have been yet attained in the history of mankind. When he touches this theme, he overlooks the general ignorance and incompetence of men which he has acknowledged, their selfishness and recklessness which he has deplored, their unbelief, perverseness, and hardness of heart for which God condemns them, and the necessity of governments, and widely distributed helps, to any tolerable enjoyment of the means of happiness, and even the existence of a social state. He refers too much to the tyranny of rulers, too little to the incapacity and rebelliousness of subjects, and computes, inadequately, the reciprocal influence of these destructive causes in the existing derangements of the world. Defective social organizations figure more to his excited imagination than the spirit of wickedness in every

human heart, and the abuses of authority seem equivalent to its unwarrantable assumption. He sees but one side of the question before him, and that he places out of its natural relations. He discusses slavery, not as referable to any public necessities, or as conducive to any beneficial ends, but as begun, continued, and ended in the lusts and passions of usurping despots; not as a matter of general expediency, but individual malignity; not as if God were using it, by good and bad men alike, in the exercise of their respective voluntary natures, to perfect his designs of government, but as the work only of malignant spirits to defeat the ends of Providence, and multiply victims of destruction. He reasons as if all these evils were inherent in the system; as if the system alone corrupted the men, not men the system; and the destruction of the system would be the regeneration of the men. He is turned about. He mistakes mechanism for life, and life for mechanism; the predicate for the subject; the clothes for the man; and sinks his own Christian doctrine of sin in the pagan doctrine of derangement. He looks at the latter, directly, with his telescope, and at the other with the instrument inverted. He renounces the experimental wisdom of the past, and exalts the speculative fancies of the present; and the one Christ of the Bible gives way, in his mind, to the many Christs of a more *spiritual* philosophy. He is charmed. In the extravagance of his

enthusiasm he would, by a touch, transport society from its present rough scene of probation, trial, and discipline, to Utopia, and mesmerize the accursed earth into paradise regained.

This unfortunate habit of mind leads him, against his better principles, to blur, misrepresent, and caricature whatever is likely to disturb his pleasant dream. Thus: — he travesties the argument of Presbyter as if, because there are convulsions and calamities in the physical, therefore Presbyter had concluded there ought to be also corresponding disturbances in the moral world; that, because strong beasts devour the weaker, therefore strong men ought to act like beasts of prey towards their inferiors; and that "a course of oppression is better adapted to reform bad men, or relieve the imbecile and ignorant, than one of manifest kindness and compassion." Consequently, assuming, — for he never loses sight of his grand postulate, — that slavery, *per se*, is necessarily a system of oppression and cruelty, he makes Presbyter commit the odious absurdity of preferring injustice and cruelty to kindness and compassion.

In a less excited state of mind our warm reviewer would have spared this invidious rhetoric, and discussed his adversary's reasoning as it is, — if he had then seen fit to discuss it at all; — not that, because the physical world is disordered, therefore it is right

to disorder also the moral and social world, — but, that physical, moral, and social natures are alike disordered, and by the same universal cause; — that they are all related parts of one comprehensive system; — that, all these related parts, being alike upheaved, disjointed, and deranged by sin, it is the will of God measurably to control and limit their common irregularities, during the present probationary state of the earth and man; — that, as it is sometimes needful, for security, improvement, and life itself, to curb and restrain the disorderly elements of the one, so also of the other; — that all this is made evident by the records of history, the analogies of experience, and, more authoritatively, by natural religion, whether traditional, or republished in the Holy Scriptures; — that not only wisdom and justice, but goodness and mercy, appear in this, as in all other departments of the Divine government; — that all the Divine attributes are equally honored in putting ignorant and imbecile men under guardianship, and the vicious under restraint, *against their will*, when higher interests are at stake, and as well on a large scale as a small, — in respect to a race as to an individual man; — that it is better to make them grind in the mill for their subsistence, and the benefits of discipline, than to leave them in their natural state of hopeless incompetency and savage ferocity; — that the State, God's minister and representative, is the

proper judge of occasions for the exercise of its prerogative, in these respects; — that these occasions it is not more difficult to understand than how to secure ourselves against frosts, mildews, and volcanoes; or the ravages of war, pestilence, and famine; or the disadvantages of ordinary pauperism and crime; — and that it is a part of our providential discipline, in this bad world, to do all these analogous things, by appropriate means, and such as God ordains, and to do them thoroughly and well, that the ills of this life may be as much as possible diminished, till God shall remove them, if at all, in some way unknown to nature and experience, by removing the cause of them in the wickedness and imbecility of man. This reasoning is not blind; and it would not have been difficult for the reviewer to have understood it, if he had been less impatient of it, or of its natural effect; and he would not then have paraded the absurd inference which he has drawn from it, — that "the Saviour, if he had entertained such views, would have sent forth strong companies of slave-catchers and traders, instead of a few peaceful disciples, among the benighted and degraded inhabitants of the earth."

But he would have been likely to have drawn another and a different inference which evidently he did not think of, — that these peaceful disciples, when they made converts among the enslaved, would not exhort

them to manifest their Christian spirit by overturning and abolishing an institution intended to restrain and discipline incompetent and wicked men, — an institution which, notwithstanding their own particular inconveniences and sufferings in it, had raised them from the worse condition of barbarians, and brought them within reach of the means of grace; and which now would best serve the ends of the Divine government by their submissive and obedient behavior in it. He would have recollected, also, that these same disciples had acted upon that more natural inference, and had authoritatively required of all converted slaves to whom the Gospel should ever come, that they should be obedient to their own masters who had bought them with money, even as to Christ who had bought them with blood, 'counting them worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed,' not "the good and gentle only, but also the froward," "whereunto also they were called;" — that they had required these precepts to be everywhere taught, with exhortation, declaring "that if any man teach otherwise he is proud, knowing nothing, doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness," 'from whom every Christian man should withdraw himself.' He would have better appre-

ciated the charge of the great Apostle, — "If thou mayest be free, use it rather," — it is far better; "but, if thou be a slave, care not for it" — stand in thy probation; profit by thy discipline; 'be content with food and raiment,' and you shall soon be a king in glory. Those inspired men knew, better than their illuminated critics of the present time, what belonged to the integrity of natural religion, and its relations to a higher dispensation.

If our reviewer had more carefully considered these not unintelligible matters, he would also have comprehended what he now professes himself unable to fathom; — namely, the reason why, upon the principles of Presbyter, the servants of the church should not now reduce bad and injurious men to servitude, for the peculiar ends of the church; for example, their conversion. He would have understood that reason to be, because the ends of the church *are peculiar;* because church and State are organized for essentially different purposes, requiring different administrators, and different methods. He would have perceived the church to be an *ecclesia,* — a class of persons called, supernaturally, out of the State, for peculiar ends of the Divine government; and that their Christian duty, in relation to the State, is, to be an example of righteousness whereby the State might be kept true to its first and Divine principles, and not subject to agitations and overturnings by counter-

acting its original design. He would have learned that Christian men, and ministers of the Gospel, would best show their fidelity to the State, and to the Lord of all, not by discussing governmental theories and puzzles; not by promulgating mere speculative doctrines of liberty, equality, and the rights of man; not by overstepping their sphere to instruct and lead the governments of earth; not by devising plans, and multiplying experiments for the better ordering of affairs; but by the practical commending of a meek and quiet spirit, and the dignified proprieties of a godly life; not by catering to the prejudices and passions of uneasy and ambitious partisans, nor by vain attempts to sanctify political factions and cabals, or the course of civil legislation, by the professed or real purity of their religious profession, but by diffusing among all classes and parties the healthful influence of a renewed mind. He would have apprehended that Christianity saves bad men, not by compelling, but attracting them to the common Redeemer; not by political organizations, but the spirit of faith and prayer; not by fomenting discords and divisions, but by recalling the refractory and contentious to the duties of natural religion, through a superinduced principle of Christian love. He would have better considered that the church, when it has called in vain upon evil-doers to be reconciled to God, must then leave the State to secure its own safety

agreeably to the prescripts of its natural institution. He would have judged, with a better appreciation of government and law, that men have no natural rights independent of their duties to God, and to one another; no authorized freedom from restraints without which they would perish in inactivity and want, or bite and devour one another, or exterminate the better portions of mankind. God has not so left the world; nor is it consistent with his will that any theories of human liberty, or any consequent stirrings of sentiments and sympathies which, as things are, would naturally reduce the world to such a state, should have countenance from Christian and patriotic men. Bad enough all society is, and bad enough its natural institutions are likely to become, in the decline incident to all things human, in the present state; but, at the worst, they are better than would be the want of them, or than the wild attempts of ignorant, corrupt, and infatuated men to construct other forms, regardless of the principles of natural religion, and the inductions of a world-wide experience. The Scripture, echoing the voice of natural religion, finds terms enough in which to condemn oppressors, and denounce upon them the righteous judgments of heaven. But all language would fail to describe the horrors of a general anarchy, or the worse confusions of an universal Babel. Such a catastrophe, however, can never happen. God is too merciful; and has

otherwise ordained. He will cast down the guilty thrones of earth, and consume tyrants and oppressors with fiery judgments, to introduce the dominion of the King of kings; but he will not leave mankind in general to the wildfire of their ungodly passions.

Presbyter respects the generous sympathies of his fraternal reviewer, and still more his many better qualities of mind and heart. Had they been directed by a different class of studies, regulated by more dispassionate reflection, and chastened by a less positive and dogmatic spirit, they would have given a healthier tone to his mental activity, and contributed to a safer use of his official influence. If, instead of kindling at the heresies and hardness of heart supposed to be evinced in the letter of Presbyter, he had pursued more deeply the inquiries suggested by it, he would have gained, in that now so much neglected field of ministerial research, more instructive and affecting views of the Divine counsels, and corresponding excitements to a more evangelical benevolence. Natural religion would have taught him deeper mysteries of providence, and revelation higher purposes of moral government. He would have better comprehended the present disordered state of the earth and man, and that illustrious prophetic future 'when the whole groaning and travailing creation shall be delivered from its bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.'

2. *From Revealed Religion.*

To Presbyter's inquiries under this head, our considerate reviewer objects, — that slavery cannot be an ordinance of Scripture because its alleged scriptural formulas do not correspond to his ideas and definitions of the institution. Slavery, in his view, and according to his ever recurring postulate, is essentially and entirely evil, and its scriptural authority could not be admitted, without a formula as express as that of the passover, or baptism, or the Lord's supper.

The solecism here involved is of little consequence. It is, doubtless, an inadvertency. But it is of consequence to maintain the principle which the objection overlooks, that the will of God is supreme and authoritative, however it be declared in his word. It is not for us to prescribe with what forms, or in what terms, he shall make known his will. We are competent judges, *a priori,* neither of what God should ordain, nor how he should ordain it; and to object, afterwards, that any published institution of his is incredible because, in either or both of these respects, it is inconsistent with our ideas of right or fitness, is to sit in judgment upon his wisdom, and is a virtual abnegation of his authority. Upon such a principle Abraham would not have attained to the blessings of the covenant; Lot would have perished in the burning Sodom; and the Israelites would have found

their graves on the shores of the Red Sea. There is no higher court than that of heaven. An appeal from that to an inner light of taste or conscience, is unbelief. But it is greater folly; for whose taste, or whose conscience shall be the umpire? It results in utter confusion, or in submission to the strongest arm. It breeds infidelity and anarchy first, and ends in civil and religious despotism. It makes a short stay at Paris, and pitches its tent at Rome. But it is atheistic everywhere.

It is not less to be observed that, between those institutions which stand in natural religion, — that is, those by which God carries on his government of the world according to nature, and those other institutions which are supernatural, and peculiar to the *ecclesia*, there is an essential difference, and God makes a corresponding difference in their formulas of appointment. The ordinances of the church are first constituted and announced by Scripture. They require, of course, special formality answerable to their supernatural design. The ordinances of the State are anterior. The Scripture finds them as they have existed for generations, gives them its simple recognition, and modifies them to suit the exigencies of a new economy. This is enough to settle their Divine authority; and God does no more than is sufficient to his purpose. He commits no superfluity of legislation. Whatever ordinance of

natural religion we find acknowledged, confirmed, and regulated by the written word, is as truly Divine, as if it had its origin in the Revelations, and is as positively obligatory, in its order, upon the conscience of mankind. It stands above the criticism of our faculties. It is simply for our faith. If God, in the Scripture, admits and owns an antecedent natural ordinance; if he refers to its antecedent history as an exponent of his will in his general natural government; if he declares, prophetically, that it shall subsist a given length of time, or during the existence of particular persons, nations, or races upon the earth, or indefinitely; if he prescribes, by express and positive legislation, how it shall be administered in general, or, in specific instances, dispenses formal rules for it in reference to certain specific ends; if, in successive periods, he enacts, occasionally, precepts adapted to the particular conditions of the parties concerned in it, or connected with it; if he annuls it not before its appointed time, nor at all, nor condemns it, nor gives the least intimation that it should be abolished; if he actually and historically treats the respective parties according to their behavior in it; and explicitly rebukes and condemns all intermeddlers with it, and with other related institutions, 'as proud, knowing nothing, despisers of authority, and speaking evil of things

they understand not;' — it must certainly be very presumptuous to question such an ordinance, to oppose it, to conspire against it, and move heaven and earth to effect its overthrow because it does not answer to our *a priori* ideas, or our speculative notions in regard to the best way of governing the world; or because it was not set up with terms and definitions agreeable to our favorite hypotheses, or our plans for the reformation of society, or the opinions of our particular school, or sect; or because its practical working falls short, in our judgment, of its theoretical design, and disappoints our expectations; or because the world makes a bad use of it, and thereby aggravates personal injuries or social irregularities, baffling our reckonings of human progress, or our predictions of a perfect state. It is a poor compliment to Scripture, and to the author of it, to reduce it thus to the measure of our conceits and speculations; and great impiety to pretend that Scripture, when thus contrary to our notions, is a curse to mankind, and ought to be rejected, as some wise men have very unwisely affirmed. It argues a great exasperation and recklessness of the self-will, and is more hazardous than such presumptuous persons imagine to their stability in the faith, and their beneficial influence in society. There is no variety of scepticism that has not its origin in this

vanity of human conceit. It is the historical and prophetical cause of all the past, present, and future apostasies of the church, and revolutions of the State.

To these first principles Presbyter directed the inquiry of his brethren; and he doubts not that they, and particularly the reviewer, would have found no small advantage from keeping them diligently in mind, instead of shunning and evading them. For they admit of an easy application to the question of slavery now in hand, and open up the whole body of argument from Scripture in support of it. Slavery is but the objective form of them, and as necessary to them as body is to soul in constituting a perfect man. The Scripture testifies to the whole series of historical and prophetical facts which are their natural exponent, and vindicates, both in the facts and principles, the holy government of God.

Thus: — the hand of inspiration points us, with unmistakable precision, to the subjection of mankind in general to the toil and sweat of *slaving* the earth, upheaved, deranged, cursed with thorns and thistles, vexed by terraqueous and atmospheric irregularities, plagued with pestilences and famines, rocked by perpetual convulsions, and "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and the perdition of ungodly men," — on account of the sin of their progenitors; — to the subsequent banishment, stigma, social inferiority, and civil disability of the murderous Cain; — to the

proscription and alienation of his posterity in their generations; — to the judgments which fell successively upon the descendants of Abel for intercourse and intermarriage with the proscribed and accursed race, till the earth was deluged on account of violating an ordinance which God had judged necessary to the preservation of virtue, and the continuance of a social state; — to the unnatural crime of Ham, at the outset of a new experiment and dispensation upon the repeopled earth; — to the consequent prophetic malediction of Noah upon this degenerate son, corresponding to the previous curse of Cain, dooming his posterity, definitely and indefinitely, to perpetual servitude to his more virtuous brethren, and making his degradation subservient to their social enlargement, as an everlasting memorial in vindication of the righteous government of God; — to the historical fulfilment of that prophetic curse in all the subsequent periods of Jewish and Christian history, verifying the Divine Word in a long course of signal providenceseq ually with respect to the Hamitic, Semitic, and Japhetic nations down to the present day, and calling the attention of the world to this perpetual sign of God's personality and active rule among the children of men, through all the vicissitudes of human affairs; — to the authorized enslaving of imbecile and dangerous men by the patriarchs, in all periods, till the giving of the law, in token of the Divine purpose

to preserve society, measurably, henceforth, from the evils which had brought the flood upon the earth; — to the specific commands of God to the Israelites to reduce their barbarous and ungodly neighbors to bondage, in subserviency to the Divine purpose of sequestering that nation, as his peculiar property, till Japheth should come into possession of the tents of Shem; — to the repeated enslaving of the Jews themselves, by Divine appointment, and in fulfilment of Divine predictions, for their conformity to those vile practices for which they had been commanded to enslave their heathen neighbors, — all setting forth the jealous care of the Divine providence lest society should be broken up, in derogation of the Divine covenant, and the derangement of the Divine plan concerning the future Messianic ages; — to the judgments of God upon the Jews when they abused this ordinance to the oppression of the heathen whom they were required to reduce, and privileged to buy and sell, for the better ordering of the State; and to similar judgments upon the heathen when they inflicted like abuses upon the captive Jews; — to the existence and severe abuses of slavery in the time of Christ and the Apostles, their unqualified recognition of the ordinance, and equally unqualified reprobation of its abuses, and to their express and often repeated injunctions upon both masters and slaves whereby the ordinance would be made more subservient to its nat-

ural design; — and to all this without the slightest intimation in the Old Testament or the New, as if slavery were a necessary and unmitigated evil, or inconsistent with any *natural rights* of man, or contrary to any dictates of justice, benevolence, prudence, or propriety; — but, contrarily implying, with irresistible significancy, that any such intimation, on any such pretended grounds of natural rights, justice, benevolence, prudence, or propriety, would be absurd, contradictory to all the known methods and historical records of the Divine government over the fallen world, and not to be thought of by any Christian man, or even any mere philanthropist who would justify his title to such a name, in carrying on this wild and distracted natural scene before the predicted day of its supernatural restitution.

In the same line of reasoning it is also evident, and of great consequence to be observed, that the same Divine will which ordained slavery as an important variety of government over degenerate men, has also benignantly guarded it, in its own proper order, and equally under natural and revealed religion, by the remaining sympathies and charities of our fallen nature; by our natural sense of order, decorum, propriety, utility; by our humane and patriotic feelings; by the conveniences and comforts of domestic life; by the force of public opinion, and the greater stress of conscientious fear; by express precepts of

the Scripture, and the general obligations which it imposes upon all superiors in place and office; and, in fine, by whatever checks, restraints, or inducements pertain to the nature of man and the social state; — that express and specific judgments are also denounced upon all who should abuse their prerogative, and lord it over their subject and abject fellow-creatures for the indulgence of their own passions; and that God has, sometimes, for example to the world, actually subjected such lordly tyrants to the very indignities which they had wantonly inflicted upon their inferiors and dependants, and even to the lower condition of brute beasts — to eat grass like oxen, — till the holy sovereignty of God was vindicated, and his righteous government was acknowledged.

But, though the Scriptural formulas of slavery be different, for the reasons above suggested, from those of ecclesiastical institutions, which have a supernatural origin, and a corresponding guarded limitation, they are not different from those of other *natural* ordinances republished in Scripture, and whose Divine authority is consequently admitted by all Christian men. For example; — the institution of the family, and of the State in general, — excepting only the theocratic nation of the Jews, — stand on the same Scriptural basis with slavery; that is, they are similarly recognized, confirmed, made the subject of general legislation, and of express and

positive precepts to the parties concerned in them. We look in vain, in Scripture, for any such precise commands in respect to any one of them, or such definitions and limitations, as we find concerning the passover, the apostolical commission, the eucharist, or other ordinance merely appropriate to a new ecclesiastical discipline. Consistency requires, accordingly, the acceptance of them all similarly, as Divine institutions; and the rejection of any one of them, would, consistently, require the rejection of the whole. This is well understood by those who are committed to follow their anti-slavery ideas, at all hazards; and they behave accordingly. Whatever may be thought of the principles of these infatuated men, they deserve well for their straightforward logic, and for never balking at natural conclusions. We should be tempted to admire their boldness, if we did not know it to be the effect of madness, in consigning, as they do, the family, State, church, with their respective degrees, prerogatives, and ordinances, to the same grave of antiquated superstitions — the alleged contrivance of kings and priests to hamper the aspiring intellect, and arrest the natural progress of society. Our better reviewer, if he would not choose to be classed with these more liberated philanthropists, and come out, at length, in a similar dishonor, should be careful not to put himself in their *curriculum;* for a logical necessity, with reins in hand, it is very difficult to control.

This remarkable drift of Scripture, in concurrence with natural religion, it is, of course, an arduous undertaking to withstand. It is easier to evade it; and evasion is the familiar alternative of those who are not yet prepared to renounce the Divine authority of Revelation. Their ingenuity, in this respect, is worthy of a better cause. It is never at a loss, when a seeming opportunity occurs, to suggest a convenient contrary interpretation, or a questionable fact of history; a mooted point in ethnology, a professional problem, or a fifth, tenth, twentieth, or a figurative, instead of the natural and primary meaning of a Scripture term;* an array of onesided

* Our speculative reformers make very convenient use of philology and criticism in support of their hypotheses. In their hands a dictionary is as supple as a rod, which, if it had not a reflex action, through its natural tendency to a perpendicular, might permanently serve their turns. But it reacts, and smites them; for, though it is easy to multiply accommodated and figurative meanings of a term, it is difficult to conceal the original and legitimate meaning, or to prove that meaning not applicable where God has made it so. When that violence is used, nature and Scripture resume their prerogatives, and avenge their wrongs.

An instance occurs in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for October. An ingenious writer would there convince us, by some display of learning, that "the word used for servant, or bondservant, in the Hebrew Scriptures," does not mean *slavery*. He is careful enough, like our reviewer, to say "*slavery* according to its modern definition." But he would have his readers understand, that *slavery*, without a qualification, has no warrant from the Scripture. That is the object of his article.

But if the writer had pursued his inquiries more extensively, and upon a more scientific method, he would have come out in directly opposite

statistics, or the authority of a great name; a scholastic theory, a political puzzle, or a declaration

conclusions. And those opposite conclusions would have been just, because consistent with the principles of language; the peculiar idioms of Scripture; its general theology and ethics; and the facts of sacred and profane history; — which cannot be said of his present speculations.

In all languages we find a word answering to our English word *slave*, and expressing the same meaning; namely, bondman, bondservant, one subject to a master, — the master's property legitimated according to the common laws and usages of property. This word is traceable, through all the languages, up to the original Hebrew, being the common denominator of a relation actually existing in all nations from the earliest periods of which we have any historical records. There is no period in which we do not find the account of persons so held in bondage as the possession, the goods, the "money," of their lawfully constituted owners and proprietors. Accordingly there is no time in which we do not find the word. We find the word because this relation subsists, and a proper term is needed to express it. The *thing* requires the *name*, and the *name* signifies and indicates the *thing*. From time immemorial, the word which answers to our *slave*, means a *slave*, and nothing else, except by figure and accommodation which nobody practically misunderstands. An *ebed* at Jerusalem; a *doulos* at Athens; a *servus* at Rome; and a *slave* at Washington, have been as well understood, in those respective representative cities, to mean a chattel personal, as *son* has been understood to mean the child of his father, and for the same reason, namely, the actual subsistence of the relation denoted by it, though both these terms have had numerous accommodated and figurative applications, enough to give the largest scope to fanciful philologists.

If we inquire why this particular word has always been used to denote this particular relation, we find the account of it at the setting up of the world, when man became "sold under sin," an *ebed* — a *slave* to the great adversary, and to his own lusts and passions; — a *slave* to the earth, condemned to toil and sweat for bread; a *slave* to death, the bondage of the dust out of which he was created; a *slave of slaves*, for the earth itself, cursed for man's sake, remaineth, and groaneth, and travaileth in pain, till

of independence; a conjecture, a quibble, a sarcasm, or personal reproach; — concluding always by an

the *palingennesia*, when 'the creature shall be delivered from its *bondage of corruption.*' The word is applied to the race *generically*, from the beginning, because it is 'taken captive,' 'sold,' 'bound,' 'subject,' 'enslaved' by evil; and, *specifically*, onwards, to such portions of it as most fail to profit by the advantages of a probationary state, and require restraint and discipline, till "the times of restitution." The whole chain hangs down from the throne of God; and a child may follow it, link by link. The child will not mistake till he goes to school, and is puzzled by self-interested and partisan expounders. Our friend of the *Bibliotheca* has been to school, and is confused by the jargon. If he will return to simplicities, "as a little child," he will see it all; and he will make the greatest attainment of earth, — deliverance from the slavery of scholastic subtleties into the freedom of natural and revealed religion.

It is time that the Scripture should not be made to speak, for party purposes, what it does not mean. The laws of language are laws of God, and should no more be bent from their integrity, for the ends of an hypothesis, or the interests of a party, than the laws of material nature, or the ten commandments. If we so bend them, they will return and smite us.

Not many years ago, our subtle theorists of social reform expended, after the same fashion, whatever philological and critical learning they could command, to convince the country that *wine*, "according to its modern definition," is as much unknown to Scripture as they now pretend of *slavery*; and that it ought, therefore, to be abolished, even from the Lord's table. And they convinced many to whom what is printed is always, of course, true, if it be ——— on their side of the question. What is printed on the other side could not profit them, for they do not read it. It is too old-fashioned. Or, they read it only by their improved lights.

Had our churches fallen into the snare thus laid for them, their "progress," by this time, could only have been measured by a galvanic standard. They would have become *spiritual* to the last degree of "odylic force." They would have been able to "swallow camels," till the reign of pharisaism had become absolute and universal. Wonderful

appeal to their unfailing dogma, — the hard-ridden hobby that bears them through all the vicissitudes of their crusade, — that slavery, being necessarily evil, and the parent of all abominations, must, of course, be abhorrent to the mind of God, — which, however, is nothing to their purpose, since it begs the question in dispute. Our reviewer is not unskilled in these tactics of controversial warfare. But it would have been more satisfactory to unprejudiced inquirers, that he should rather have shown the unsoundness of his adversary's principles of reasoning, or the falseness of its elements, or the defectiveness of its process, or the inconsequence of its conclusions, or its inconsistency, in general, with other admitted verities of Scripture, and the teachings of experience. This

would have been their array of 'shining cups and platters.' What these vessels, "clean" on the outside, would have contained, must be imagined.

In like manner philology, and other sciences equally complaisant and pliable, have undertaken to instruct us in respect to cosmological interpretation. Our theorists have found Moses as accommodating in respect to physics, as to ethics and theology: and they have accordingly felt themselves at liberty to make and unmake, as well as to carry on worlds, at their own pleasure. An expert, with aid of pen and ink, may construct a world, or a system, in less than six days, *and all very good.* Or, Moses is understood to be indifferent whether worlds were created at all, provided a Divinity be acknowledged ready to arrange the material eternally furnished to his plastic hand. It may yet be proved that he believed in no Divinity at all. *Humanity*, of course, will then be entirely disenthralled, and may have a free course unto perfection, — when worlds, systems, minds, and whatever else has heretofore been *imagined* within the circles of existence, will be revolved into — *one great* IDEA.

had been far better than to have made merely collateral issues, and supported them by questionable interpretations, unnatural inferences, groundless assumptions, invidious references, and partisan appeals.

But what he has done, with some show of reason, is a proper subject of analysis and criticism.

1. The reviewer, in his published article, does not take the common ground of objectors, that the curse of Noah was a mere drunken and vindictive imprecation. He is too reverent for that. He admits that it was, in some sense, prophetic. But he denies that the conduct of Ham was, in any sense, representative, or that his descendants were, in any way, implicated in it. The denial is unqualified and unsustained. Of course, it amounts to a mere expression of the writer's opinion. But it is incredible, because the prophetic curse was pronounced in view of the offence of Ham. His crime alone figured in the prophet's mind. That, and nothing else, is intimated as the ground of the malediction. The crime and the curse have been followed, through all periods, by the predicted judgments upon the family of Ham, and consequent enlargements of Shem and Japheth. The church has, consequently, always acknowledged this plenary evidence of the Divine justice and veracity, and the world has been restrained, more or less, by the terrible admonition. In view of these facts, the reviewer's mere opinion is worthless. In

view of corresponding analogies of the Divine government, it is worse; for one might with equal and similar reason, according to the speculative theology out of which most of these novelties have proceeded, deny that Adam was the representative of mankind in general; that the entail of toil and sweat, pain, sickness, and death, was declared, and has been executed as the penalty of the first transgression; — that the crucifiers of Christ represented the nation of the Jews; or that their consequent overthrow and dispersion were the ordained infliction of the curse which they imprecated upon themselves and upon their children; — or that the sanction of the fifth commandment has any virtue by which social prosperity becomes the reward of filial piety, and the earth is contrarily cursed with the shortlived and pestilent generations of such as dishonor their father and their mother. Such similitudes, of which sacred and profane records are full, must go for nothing, exponents though they are of a principle which God has written, as with a sunbeam, on the sky. We must forget the old family Bible, and the catechism, and go, for our learning, to socialistic communions, cosmopolitan theories, and mesmeric revelations. We must take our risks of being bewildered in a labyrinth of sophistries and follies, from which the shattered intellect will presently be unable, even if we would, to find deliverance.

2. That our reviewer is already in such a danger appears from his objection that "the prophetic announcement of an impending curse was made with exclusive reference to Canaan, including, of course, his posterity to some limited extent." The evident implication here is, that the iniquity of the father was visited upon the children in their generations, though the visitation was restricted to a single line, and limited in duration. Be it so: but then what becomes of the previous denial that the children were implicated *at all* in the bad conduct of their father; or that any relation of stated antecedent and consequent existed between the crime of the one and the punishment of the other? Our author surrenders his own principle. His objections neutralize each other.

But how knows he that Canaan and his posterity were alone in the suffering of the curse? There is no evidence that Canaan was yet born when Noah pronounced the malediction. The offended sire looked only upon the son who had dishonored him. He would naturally apply to him the epithet most significant of his general character, and the quality of his particular misdemeanor. That particular offence spoke for itself. His general character had been indicated before by his intermarriage with the accursed race of Cain, laying a foundation, as it did, for the social evils which would thence naturally

ensue upon the repeopled earth. Did Noah want an epithet to denote the whole? Canaan was the word. It signified, after the idiom of those times, the Cainish propensities, the Cainish associations, the Cainish act, and the Cainish influence of his ungodly son. Canaan was the proper denominator of the tainted blood that should infect so many of the future inhabitants of the world. — Or, if it were that Noah had in mind that particular son of Ham who should bear the name of Canaan, at a future day, yet, possibly, only because Canaan would inherit most of his parent's qualities, and be signalized, not exclusively, but emphatically, as deserving of the curse. Learned men have been divided upon these interpretations; and more have followed those great authorities — the Arabic and Septuagint translators, — who supply an idiomatic ellipsis, and read "the father of Canaan," as in other verses of the same chapter. Of these and other renderings, the inquiries of Presbyter would have opened to the reviewer probabilities at least as valuable as his unsupported assertion in denial of them all. — But, however, they are all of no consequence in reference to the question in dispute. For, if 'Canaan only and his posterity to some extent' were in the condemnation, the Divine right of slavery is thereby established. God, by his prophet, entails upon some descendants of Ham servitude. But servitude implies mastership, and is impossible

without it. If there be slaves, or God's will cannot be done, and his word must fail, there must be slaveholders also, by equal reason; and, if slaveholding be necessarily a sin, then God imposes a necessity upon some good men of sinning, in executing his righteous judgments upon some bad men; — which is absurd. We reject that absurd conclusion, and adjudge the slaveholder, like all other officers of the Divine government, guilty, not for his formal act by which he executes a Divine decree, but for the spirit by which he abuses his trust to the indulgence of his malignant passions. Otherwise he honors God, and is a benefactor of society. If Shem and Japheth necessarily sin in executing the prophetic curse, where is the blessing of their filial piety, and what encouragement has any man to copy it?

3. The reviewer also objects that "the curse of Canaan was long ago exhausted, partly, when the Canaanites were subdued by the Israelites, and, completely, when the remnants of the tribes in Canaan fell under the dominion of the Romans." If it were so, it would be nothing to his purpose. It would prove not that slavery is wrong, but that having answered its providential design, in respect to that particular family, it naturally ceased; or that, because they could not be reclaimed by discipline, a heavier judgment had come upon them in their destruction.

But the reviewer's opinion is without foundation.

It has not even a probable support. The evidence is on the other side. For, how was the curse exhausted? By express limitation in the prophecy itself? Not at all. That stands equally related to Shem and Japhet in their generations. It emphatically points to the enlargement of Japheth, after he should take possession of the tents of Shem. As Shem, in his probationary period, so Japheth in his period, is the prophetic master of his sinning brother; and Japheth still rules the world. Was it limited by any subsequent revelations? Not at all; but is continually recognized in Scripture down to the time of Christ. The New Testament confirms it, and directs masters and slaves how to behave, in their respective spheres, till the day of the Lord. Was it limited by the destruction of its victims on the part of the Jews and Romans? Not at all: for the histories relate that the exterminated Canaanites fled, in all directions, to the wilds of Africa, and, as evidence is not wanting, with their Cainish mark upon them. They spread themselves over the vast regions of that burning country, built great cities, made great wars, enslaved one another; and what else they did, and what they have become, the world is finding out by every new discovery. Down to the fourth century the Africans referred their origin to the Canaanites, and made that origin still more evident by their vile behavior. There they have lived, and, with such beautiful

exceptions as God is wont to make among the most degraded of mankind, have followed the pattern of their obscene and impious progenitor. There his sin has found them out, and Japheth has taken possession of his inheritance. He will hold it while he dwells in the tents of Shem, — till Jerusalem, in the fulness of time, shall become the seat of universal government, and the Abrahamic covenant shall be fulfilled, in giving all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, to *The Son of David.*

With what spirit, and for what ends, and in what manner, Japheth uses his ordained prerogative, he must take good heed, or from his Nebuchadnezzar heights of secular enlargement, and material civilization, he will fall to a brutish level. It is possible that he should so build his Babylon as to provoke heavier judgments than those of old, and that, for the abuse of the "slaves and souls of men" that are found in it, with other countless varieties of lawful but prostituted merchandise, it should be cast like a great millstone into the sea, — that prophetic symbol of popular revolution, anarchy, and destruction. But, equally in the righteous ordinance of slavery, and in the overthrow of the guilty nations who pervert it to evil, or abolish it, instead of making it subservient to its design, God will establish the veracity of his word, and vindicate the integrity of his moral government. "Is there unrighteousness

with God? God forbid! Yea, let God be true, but every man be made a liar." And this great lesson of the Scripture should be well studied in reference to the superstition of the South, and the fanaticism of the more erring North, which, otherwise, in their violent reciprocal repulsion, may meet on the other side, to dash one another in pieces. Dark, in this respect, is the problem of the future. Old men should not be scorned because they are afraid; and young men should not too confidently reckon upon their ability to arrest the laws of nature, and roll back the tide of providence. But ministers of the Gospel should take care how they place themselves, in reference to the threatening conflict of these exasperated earthly forces. The propagators of Christianity should look out. There are grave questions occasionally before them that ought not to be decided at a late hour of the night.*

But, in respect to this question of the Scripture authority of slavery, our reviewer would have been

* Allusion is made above to the action of the AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS — at its meeting in 1854 — on the Choctaw question. Great interests were then put in great jeopardy. Even that dignified and excellent body — a tower of popular strength — could not bear many such shocks as it then received by the vote of the majority. The question now sleeps. But it will awake for other discussions, and, it is to be hoped, for different judgments. Whenever the time comes, many will be urgent that the voices of such men as then constituted the minority of the Board, may not be heard in vain.

more likely to convince others, if he had been better able to convince himself. Zealous though he be, he is evidently but half persuaded in his own mind. The difficulties of Scripture trouble him, as they have troubled so many of his school, and tasked all their ingenuity of interpretation. For example; — he touches very softly upon the servants of Abraham — the representative of the patriarchal economy, — as in some sense obtained by money, yet not as the patriarch's *slaves*, but "*his people;*" or, if bought, yet not *sold* by him; or, if bought and sold, yet not "*in the American sense;*" and not in the American sense, because that would prove the father of the faithful to have been preëminently wicked, which, though possible, and, on the reviewer's principles, certain, if he were a slaveholder, yet is not the character in which it is most natural to contemplate that venerable man. Such expedients indicate that our author feels a pressure, and seeks relief by changes of position; as when one would shift a burden from one shoulder to the other, or transfer it to his arms, or carry it in his hand, or place it on the next conveyance, as the exigency should require. But none of these expedients are, ultimately, to his purpose; for, when we inquire how this money of the patriarch was applied, it appears not to have been in the form of wages to the servants, but of price to their former masters. Being, consequently, thence-

forth, the property of their new owner, it is of no consequence whether they be called his slaves, or "his people." A mere name, though technically convenient, affects nothing in respect to principle. Or, if it be admitted that Abraham never sold his slaves, that also is not material; for, if he bought, another must have sold, and his right to buy involves another's right to sell, so that between the two contracting parties the principle is established. Or, if these "people" were not slaves "in the *American* sense," that also touches not the issue; for the only question here is whether they were slaves *at all?* Presbyter is not aware that there is any *American*, or other accidental sense of slavery, that affects the essential validity of the relation, which is simply referable to the will of God, is independent of all geographical, political, and philosophical considerations whatsoever, and irrespective of the moral character of the parties concerned in it, except as, in particular cases, they are decreed, upon regular judicial process, to have violated their obligations, and thereby forfeited their rights. But such exceptional cases, or any supposable multiplication of them, that should turn the exception into the rule, would not touch the system of slavery, but its abuses by wicked men; and any consequent judicial process could not rightfully abolish the system, but their particular connection with it. Nor could these abuses properly bear the stigma of

American, for they belong not necessarily to the country more than to the system, but to human nature; and, though described justly, after the manner of the reviewer, by the stealing, maiming, shooting, or burning of the slaves, could not be limited to time or place, for these and similar atrocities have been committed by bad men in all ages and countries of the world. Such barbarities were, in fact, contemplated, beforehand, by God himself, in his giving of the law, and the proper punishments were prescribed; — which clearly indicated his will that the system itself, at all these fearful hazards, or rather, in his certain knowledge of such resulting incidental evils, should be maintained. So that slavery, in distinction from its abuses, stands in Scripture; and he who would abolish it, without a warrant, or while the natural reasons for it continue, violates an ordinance of God. He may be a good man, and sincere; but he mistakes his calling. He is blinded by an idol; and he propagates his idolatry at a risk which, in his bewilderment, he could not reckon, of the safety of the State. That so many good men should be so committed, as now, inconsiderately, to such delusions, and feel themselves, consequently, obliged to give popular currency to their mistakes and fallacies, constitutes the greatest of our public dangers.

III. The Test: — *The Law of Love.*

"God is love!" — a remarkable affirmation of the

Scripture; and its meaning is remarkable. We look for it, by distinguishing the subject from its qualities. God is not called holiness, or justice, or goodness, or truth. These are his attributes. His essence, so far as declared to us, is love; and these attributes are modes of its manifestation to his creatures. They are its objective forms exhibited in his government of the world. Love has no adjective but a participial, which represents the exercise of all the Divine attributes in glorious harmony. It is the simple, indivisible, indefinable, incomprehensible denominator of the Father of all.

"The end of the commandment is love." Natural and revealed religion is the fruit and expression of this Divine principle, intended to bind men to God and to one another. The *vinculum* is love, not of constraint, but of attraction and affinity. Religion flows out of this incomprehensible spirit, and returns to it. Love constitutes, essentially, its binding power. It is its test, and the test of every ordinance and institution that claim the sanction of its authority. Hereby we know them. All things are referable to this only true and absolute standard of virtue. All real, in distinction from formal and apparent virtue, consists in it, and is measured by it. Without it, all forms are void, and all apparent excellence is but "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." All mechanisms and organizations are good or bad only as they are

moved by this vital spring, or by hate its opposite. It is the test of slavery. If slavery cannot stand its criticism, it is the greatest of social evils, and should be destroyed. How, when, by whom, are questions of prudence and expediency that would require the greatest wisdom. But it ought to be destroyed. If those to whom its destruction naturally, or by express Divine appointment, belonged, should refuse to destroy it, they would be themselves destroyed. Love itself would destroy them; for love is the greatest of all destroyers when it meets the resisting antagonism of hate, — as the subtle lifegiving caloric sometimes upheaves the solid earth, and lays waste its cities. "God is love." But "God is a consuming fire." "A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about;" — always a fire of love, but objectively displayed in executing judgment and justice upon those whom his wisdom could not convince, nor his holiness awe, nor his goodness soften. It is the terrible proof of the evil of all sin and transgression, which are not abstractions and mere conceptions, but characteristics of voluntary and accountable beings, that they are contrary to the infinitely loving God, and that their subjection, restraint, and punishment are required in vindication of his holy sovereignty.

The account of this, as revealed by religion, and which, as it could not otherwise have been reasoned out, ambitious naturalism, in all its types, rejects, is—

that God having this infinite perfection as a moral governor, the only worthy end of his government is the manifestation of his own glory. The happiness of creatures who are infinitely below him, and dependent upon him, could not, as mere humanitarianism and philanthropy propose, be his end, but only a stated consequence of their being like him, having complacency in him, and reflecting his glorious perfections. If we suppose a world to fall from its allegiance to him, his infinite love of excellence, and his great end of thereby making himself illustrious, would, from the necessity of the case, repel the fallen, and his complacency in them could be restored only upon their recovery to virtue. The goodness of his nature might compassionately prevent their greater relapse and misery, by providential restraint and discipline. It might suggest expedients for effecting their return, and give them a probation. But if, in the exercise of their evil affections, the will — the exponent and executor of these affections — still refused the overtures of his compassion, his infinite love of virtue would more repel them, and the separation, if the probation were fruitless, would necessarily be eternal; unless we should inconsistently resort to materialism, and deny the immortality of the soul. In other words, God's infinite love is his complacency in those infinite attributes of wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth which constitute his mani-

fested character as a moral governor, and in all those creatures of his who bear and reflect his image. Whatever crosses these infinite attributes is necessarily contrary to his ends and purposes of government, and love itself, in and by which they essentially consist, must necessarily oppose, restrain, and punish it. Else moral distinctions are annihilated, our moral nature vanishes, and the very idea of a personal God and sovereign is a chimera.

Now this world is thus fallen. Natural and revealed religion presupposes this fact, and starts out from it. The systems of natural and revealed religion are the account of God's government over it as fallen, guilty, condemned, yet reprieved, susceptible of being restrained and limited in its wickedness, and of restitution, if God so please, and when, and how he pleases, through Jesus Christ, "the propitiation for our sins." Its absolute death, or that of any part of it — a death to all hope of such restitution — occurs only when the means provided for its benefit are ultimately refused, and the stated probationary period expires. These systems are the expression of Divine love; and love is honored as well in their sanctions of punishment as of reward, since God's end in his creation and government of the world, is not the happiness of his creatures, but his own glory in the manifestation of his perfections; and their happiness is only conditional upon their conformity to God, and

a stated consequence of it. Speculations about the origin of evil cannot be admitted at all into our reasonings, since that subject is utterly beyond our faculties, and God has given us no information upon it, nor a clue to guide us. Whatever be the true account of it, it could not be supposed to affect injuriously the Divine character; for that, upon the admission of a God, would be absurd. It would be equally absurd on the principles of atheism; for if there be not a God, the Divine character is not a subject of reasoning at all. But, evil certainly existing, — a matter of consciousness, experience, and revelation, — and impossible, without atheism, to be denied, the Godhead is equally dishonored, and we go to atheism only by another road, if we admit not his love of excellence as engaged to restrain and punish it, and to prevent its unnecessary inroads upon his general system.

Whatever reasons exist, then, in natural and revealed religion, for the institution of civil government, and for domestic slavery as an important modification of it, for the more effectual restraint and discipline of imbecile and wicked men, prove it to be consistent with the Divine love, and required by it for the ends of God's moral providence. Those reasons are not invalidated by the law of love, and cannot be, since they are the simple account which religion gives us of God's way of governing the fallen

world for the ends of his infinite benevolence. So far as slavery consists of punishment, and so far as it consists of discipline, it equally magnifies the Divine benevolence, and all those related attributes of God by which his love is manifested in the general ordering of this revolted scene. There is, as we have seen, no *a priori* reason why God should not ordain a state of slavery, as well as other varieties of restraint and discipline which all but virtual atheists acknowledge, and of which many are, in their nature, more severe, and more fatal to the happiness of the suffering parties, and, actually, not less but more terrible in their abuse by tyrannical and wicked men. There are conceivable and probable reasons, as we have also seen, why he should ordain it, as things are in their present disturbed and disjointed state. There is, moreover, the evidence above detailed, that he has actually ordained it. To question and oppose it, therefore, on any merely philosophical and speculative grounds, or politically, as malevolent, destructive of happiness, contrary to the rights of man, or inconsistent with our ideas of the natural progress and destiny of society, is to criticize by an infinitely unworthy standard, and incur the risks of that fatal plunge which so many wise men and whole nations have taken into atheistic unbelief. He who would prove that slavery is inconsistent with the Divine benevolence, must first prove that the world is not in

that fallen state which the institution presupposes and implies; that there are no such reasons for it in the actual condition of things, as it professes, and makes its acknowledged ground; and that there is no such proof of its ordinance in natural and revealed religion, as it sets forth. All other objections, in respect to principle, are merely conceptional, notional, and of no value; and, however speciously glossed, or eloquently discussed, or triumphantly paraded, affect not the merits of the question. The practical objections, though of far greater moment, and such as ought to move all good men to the reformation of existing evils, yet invalidate not the ordinance itself. If such evils were indefinitely multiplied, till universal discord and revolution should ensue, through the exasperated passions of mankind, that would be simply analogous to what has often happened to the best natural institutions of earth, and even to the church itself, whose Divine right, and their consistency with the law of love, have nevertheless been admitted, except by professed atheists and infidels, in every age. Such irregularities prove nothing but the wickedness of mankind. But that wickedness makes more evident the necessity of those very institutions which, as yet, through the imperfection of the parties concerned in them, have been but partially able to restrain it. It justifies the Divine wisdom in ordaining them, and the judgments consequent upon their unfaithful administration.

To one whose mind has dwelt long only upon such bad administrations, and whose warm imagination has exaggerated them, till they fill the whole circle of his vision, it is not surprising that views like these should seem, as they do to our excellent reviewer, "mere mysticism and conjecture." It is not to be expected that such persons, especially if the religious sense has followed the direction of the sympathies and passions, should be able, at once, to separate slavery, or any similar institution, from the revolting accidents with which it has been familiarly associated in their excited minds. It might even seem to them a loss of virtue to abate their zeal by looking away from scenes of wrong and suffering which keep alive their generous emotions, to what they regard as metaphysical abstractions serving only to confuse the intellect, and harden the heart. Presbyter is aware at what disadvantage he writes, in this respect, in showing the consistency of slavery, — even in regard to its merely necessary ills, — with the law of love. It is as if one should argue upon the principles of life and health, or the benevolent genius of the healing art, with sensitive, but hitherto inexperienced children, in the hospitals of the Crimea, overcome with shuddering, as they would be, at the amputation of shattered limbs, and the probing of gaping wounds. To them the surgeon would seem but as a monster, and sisters of charity but as incarnate fiends. They would be

sensible to nothing but the shrieks or imprecations of the tortured subjects, and refer them only to the quick touches of the loving operators. The teacher must be content to wait till the paroxysms of affectionate, but wounded sensibility, were over, and longer observation and more careful reflection, or an actual experience, should make his metaphysics better understood. It is so, and by a like reason, that Sinai and Calvary themselves, where, to the morbid natural eye, love is hidden behind the severities of justice, are invested only with terrors, till their sublime *rationale* is opened to the awakened and inquiring spirit. These, and such like deep things of God, are truly known only as a Divinely enlightened experience unfolds them. Otherwise God seems but as a hard master to be propitiated, an enemy to be resisted, an oppressor to be overthrown.

However, there are practical illustrations of this invidiously called mysticism which even children can understand. Our reviewer inadvertently suggests a striking instance; namely, the loving intercourse sometimes subsisting between master sand slaves in the patriarchal age. A touching account he gives of Abraham's "people." "They were married, and with their children were incorporated into his great family, and all the males were in the same way dedicated to the service of his and their covenant God. Unprotected by any government, he, with his wife and

immense flocks and herds, was safe under the guardianship of these faithful men, though surrounded by heathen tribes, and often removing from place to place. In arms they followed him, and rescued Lot out of the hands of the hostile kings who were carrying him away captive. One of them was intrusted with the delicate task of procuring from abroad a wife for Isaac, and if Abraham died childless, was to have been his heir.* They were Abraham's people, and looked up to him not as their oppressor, but as their common friend." — This instance, which is the author's own, though there had never been another, would have been fatal to his theory that slavery is necessarily inconsistent with the law of love. It is a remarkable exemplification of that law. It represents slavery practically according to its Divine idea, — 'mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace embracing each other.'

But it is not alone. There have been children of Abraham, holden in the covenant, from his day to the present, and there will be to the end of time, standing in the same magisterial relation, and exercis-

* This is the same who said to Laban in urging his master's suit; — "The Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-*slaves* and maid-*slaves*, and camels, and asses." Gen. 24: 35. — That faithful slave seems not to have been an abolitionist. But the *new lights* had not then risen.

ing it with the same spirit. Christianity supposes this in its manifold precepts to this very class of persons; and the religion of Christ is not less fitted to sanctify the relation, than was the dispensation under which the virtuous patriarchs honored God. Bad as the Christian world has become, worse than the Jewish, because of its abuse of a greater light, God has not left it, and he will not leave it. In the darkest times he will have a remnant to carry out his purposes to the end of the age; and, for their sakes, his judgments will be stayed, and the day of vengeance will be shortened. Those excited men who cannot appreciate the many honorable examples in our own country, as they are represented not merely by such corrected observers as Dr. Adams, but by slaves themselves who must be supposed to know, may be very honest and sincere, but their eyes are holden. They see not what it most concerns them to understand, if they would be wise and patriotic men; and their blunder may be even more injurious to their country than to themselves. It dishonors Christ; for it dishonors the many Christian masters and Christian slaves, whose familiar habits of life, if they were better understood, would be seen to bear no remote resemblance to the Abrahamic pattern. There are virtuous and honorable men, not a few, and ministers of the Gospel, whose very slaveholding is carried on, against their convenience and tastes, if

not their interest, from mere motives of Christian charity. They are weary of a burden which, nevertheless, they bear patiently for the public good. In every slaveholding State and city there are doubtless more than enough to have saved Sodom, who are neither "evidences of the deplorable frailty of human nature," nor "examples of warning." They are not even indiscreet, as some have asserted of our Lord, when, at Cana of Galilee, he was blind to the wisdom of a more enlightened age, and turned the water into wine; — the loving Christ himself, forgetful of his high commission, and giving the authority of his Divine example to an institution destructive of the happiness of mankind! We rebuke such profane criticism, to whatever subject it is applied. We accept not the pharisaism which so interprets all things by its shallow, outside, and vain-glorious philosophy, till it generates, unconsciously, a wild fanaticism, its block-head crazed by the dyspeptic vapors of its crude progenitor, ambitious of nothing but to scatter firebrands, and drive its smoking chariot over an incapable because then demented people.

"But wisdom is justified of all her children." Christ was well understood by the wise of his own time, to be neither a gluttonous man, nor a wine-bibber, and no otherwise a friend of publicans and sinners than as he did not denounce them to a swift destruction, but ate and drank with them, as a

heavenly messenger, for their good, and the good of their households with them. As to what his pharisaical accusers judged he gave himself no concern. Why should he? Or why should his disciples after him? Prejudice and passion will see nothing as it is, and understand nothing; but the greater the truth the more violent will be their resistance to it, and the more wrathful their condemnation of those whose opposite principles and motives they cannot comprehend. We must keep on our way, and wait till the heat subsides, and the flurry is over. Such excitements will have their course, and their end, though it be in spasms and revolutions. They should not turn true men from a better purpose; for explosions are better than the sacrifice of righteous principles; and a general catastrophe is not so great an evil as the regal instalment of atheistic folly. Truth may fall, but it can never die; or, if it die, it will have a better resurrection. God's government will stand, somehow, though all the winds and waves beat against it; and he will carry it on, through all adversities, till he has put all things under him. Its order cannot be reversed. He made the world as he did, and not otherwise, to please himself; and he regulates and medicates its disordered constitution agreeably to his own counsels, and not the notions of his fallen creatures. We cannot make that straight which he has made crooked. The leopard will be spotted, and the

Ethiopian will be black, in spite of us. What things he has constituted unequal we cannot make equal if we try; but we increase the inequality by our mad attempts, even if we are not destroyed ourselves by the reaction. There is less love than wisdom in the experiment; and it will fall as much through its disguised selfishness as folly. Beautiful it would seem to have a state of universal equality and brotherhood. But a community, after the best pattern of cosmopolitan ingenuity, breaks up by its mere expansion, or a more inglorious collapse. It does not hold together long enough for death to cover the shame of its projectors. The fabric of all reform, whether philosophical, or political, or both, without an indwelling Christ, is but a child's plaything. It lasts but while he builds it; and the topstone that he lays with shoutings, sinks the whole fabric into ruins. What becomes, then, of the conceited and noisy architect, though he be a child of larger growth, and his edifice be a capitol? If he rears it with the materials of his previously demolished habitation, his last state is worse than his first, and his ultimate discomfort is only exceeded by the intoxication that produced it. If our better philanthropists, fired, as they are always likely to become, at length, by a political mania, should overturn the social fabric because of the necessary toil and sweat that compact and sustain it, or the unnecessary oppressions and cruelties that

bad men wantonly inflict within it, what would come next? They would be the first to beg for an iron despotism, to save the things that remained from an absolute destruction. What revolutionism becomes, upon the mere instincts, or speculative fancies, even of well meaning and Christian men, history has given sufficient warning, if experience could ever make such imaginative people wise. Let them follow, if they will, the spirit that drives them on; but let them not call it — *love!* Not such was the pattern of the loving Christ.

Our philosophers of oracular instincts, and Divine speculative ideas, should be more considerate of things actual and experimental, not as they would have them, but as God ordains them. It is idle to affect a wisdom, or a love, greater than he has manifested in his system of the world; or to imagine that we can best honor him by reversing the analogies of nature, and the corresponding teachings of the Scripture. It is not a false science that describes his works in their respective genera, species, varieties, orders, individuals; nor a spurious charity that is pleased when these perform the offices of their respective spheres, each in its own diversity, but all together so as to produce a general harmony. We could not make a better constitution. We should be likely, by our intermeddling, to stop the movement of the whole. "If the whole body were an eye, where were the

hearing? if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him. If they were all one member, where were the body?" Our philosophers would not have us require of others what we would not willingly perform ourselves; nor perform ourselves what, according to their ideas of equality, others have no prerogative to require of us; — but run away, and steal, and kill that we may run. It were better that their love should constrain them to entertain the fugitives, and divide with them the domestic hearth. If they did not then more commend their theories, they would better test their sincerity, and probably sooner learn to bring their theory and practice into a more natural correspondence. Frequent visits of the "angels" would, at least, oblige them to be more conversant with the realities of life, and imagination would give place to a more corrected judgment, in respect to the constituted relations of the social state.

We are slow to learn the lesson, amidst the confusions incident to the present state of things, but it is plain enough when understood, — that true charity consists not in doing what is impossible, or destructive, but what is for another's welfare in the sphere where God has placed him. To abandon that beautiful simplicity, for the sake of reducing all the spheres to one diameter, and all the diameters to

a point, is undoubtedly more magnificent and imposing, according to a speculative standard; it is romantic and heroic, and figures most where an ambitious spirit, that could not otherwise be honored, delights to open its noisy theatres, and dignify its prospective triumphs. But it saves nothing. It feeds not the hungry, nor clothes the naked, nor comforts the afflicted. They perish by generations, while the gaudy vision tarries; and their aggravated wrongs and miseries cry out, at length, against the insane projectors of a fanciful salvation. We can relieve them, if we will, while they remain in their several appointed places, under the general "bondage of corruption," and possibly, now and then, lift them to a nearer equality with our own; but we cannot remove the curse of sin. He only can do that whose righteous law inflicted the curse, and whose word is pledged to produce, by and by, a new creation. Meanwhile it is our probation to improve, and not to overturn, the present state; to save, one by one, whom God puts within our reach, by active kindness, and not the whole, in mass, by bold resolves and frothy declamations; to give help to the perishing, and joy to the stricken and withered heart, and not call down fire from heaven that would destroy the hovel equally with the palace, and desolate the fields that otherwise would have yielded food for all. From those ashes what would grow? What would our

reformers have? They would abolish and destroy. What substitute would they produce? They speak great swelling words of an expected better state, but they define it not. Let them present their plan. Let us have the consummate project of their dream. Let their New Jerusalem come down out of heaven. Let their city in the clouds descend, that we may see its stately bulwarks, and consider its palaces; that we may walk its golden streets, and drink of its crystal river, and rejoice in its glorious temple that hath no need of the sun or the moon to shine in it. Surely their laboring mountain ought, by this time, to bring forth, at least, — *a scheme*, if not for the regeneration of the world, yet of these ends of it which they are turning upside down.

IV. Corollaries.

If slavery, as argued above, be an ordinance of God, according to natural and revealed religion, and if it be consistent with that Divine love in which all religion essentially consists, it follows: —

1. That all contrary suppositions, theories, and interpretations must be false, wherever the fallacy lies; since the will of God, and not human imaginations and conceits, is the supreme law of the world; — that they are not less false because they have captivated so large portions of society, in different periods, and have become inwrought, so extensively, into the affairs of social, political, and ecclesiastical life; since

no numbers or combinations of men can annul or alter a Divine constitution; — and that this fallacy would not be less but more destructive, should it be entertained by the Church and State in general, or the greater part of them, and work out, consistently, civil revolution, or the abolition of slavery throughout the country, or the world; since questions of right and wrong cannot be settled by majorities, and the Divine government cannot be superseded; but all such attempts react, sooner or later, and in ways incomprehensible, beforehand, to the greater confusion and ultimate loss of the misguided people; — as all history confirms.

2. That we may reasonably look for the fallacy in that specious humanitarian philosophy which, according to its respective types, and periods, and degrees, denies, ignores, diminishes, or travesties those facts of natural and revealed religion which slavery presupposes, and in view of which it was instituted by God; namely, — the fallen, depraved, imbecile, disordered, and condemned state of the world requiring the ordinance for the better restraint, discipline, and correction of bad men, and of some more than others; and for the better preservation of society in general, during its probationary state; — a philosophy which, contrarily, dignifies the sinful nature of man as capable, without such restraint and discipline, of working out for itself, in a state of liberty, independence, and

equality, personal and public prosperity and happiness; — a philosophy which accordingly substitutes the natural sentiments, sympathies, tastes, volitions, purposes, and resolves of the human mind for supernatural grace; or puts the latter in subserviency to the former; or both out of their due relation and proportion to each other; — a philosophy which, virtually affirming the related natural ability and perfectibility of the race, proposes corresponding educational, social, political, and ecclesiastical organizations, for the fuller and freer development of these alleged natural powers, and, by the interaction and reciprocal influence of such natural powers and corresponding institutions, to recover society from its disturbances and irregularities, and settle it in a state of general intelligence, refinement, thrift, and happiness; — a philosophy which, according to its different degrees, accepts the Divine word but as a product of assisted human faculties, without the plenary inspiration of God, or as a mere complement to human wisdom, and subject to its criticism and interpretation as a standard of judgment and belief; or which wholly rejects the Scripture, and, in its stead, exalts the inspirations of human genius, the outflow of human sympathies, the impulse of human instincts, or the directory of the human conscience, or mingles these all in indescribable confusion, as a guide of life; — a philosophy which makes human happiness

the end of living, and productiveness of happiness the criterion of virtue; which holds nature and art, politics and legislation, trade and commerce, literature, science, and religion, subservient to these vain ideas, impressing its own character insensibly upon existing civilizations, as material or intellectual, and not spiritual; as æsthetical, and not moral; formal, and not vital; or fanatical, and not devout; — a philosophy which produces mechanisms without vitality; inflation without growth; activity without strength; profession without principle; combinations without fellowship; vaunting without accomplishment; magnificence without dignity; and honor without virtue; — a philosophy which glories in all these formalities and appearances, as the product of its own ingenuity and skill, and glorifies not that God "Of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things." It is of the earth, earthly; and it perishes with the earth.

3. That the anti-slavery movement in general, being a remarkable phenomenon of modern times, if it be inconsistent, as argued above, with natural and revealed religion, *must be* referred to the prevalence of this false philosophy, since this, and no other known cause, is adequate to so remarkable an effect; — that such a reference of it is not, as pretended by the reviewer, "mere mysticism, conjecture, and unwarrantable assumption," because such a philosophy certainly exists; because it has a certain

history from an early period of Christianity; because it has had, all along, diverse commentators and propagandists who have infused it into the theology, ethics, and legislation of all periods; because its various expounders, apologists, and adversaries may be read, if they are not, by all men; because, in this country, and in its relations to theology, Jonathan Edwards is known to have refuted it; because, nevertheless, it has been, ever since, in different forms, having a free course, while Jonathan Edwards is well-nigh forgotten, or his meaning is interpreted out of him, and his views of the question now in hand are well-nigh suppressed; because the cause and the effect have a natural congruity and relationship to each other, and are actually found to coexist in the same minds, institutions, and communities, flowing out in the same channels, with similar and reciprocal influences and results, as, on a smaller scale, in many past periods of history; — and, furthermore, that this account is sufficient, and is an adequate, and the only possible account of the related moral, social, and political phenomena which are now occurring among the civilized and half-civilized nations in general, distracted, as they are, by these Utopian ideas, and vainly attempting, in disregard of Scripture and experience, to improve their bad conditions, not by converting individual men, according to the Gospel, but by overturning public institutions in despite of it;

not by infusing a new life, but destroying old organizations; and by reconstructing their social edifices not in submission to the word of God, but the theories of unbelieving men, and in contemptuous disregard of those first and everlasting principles which are necessary to preserve their freedom from licentiousness, their self-government from anarchy; or, to prevent the necessary reaction of taller and more oppressive despotisms, and the meeting, at length, of the greatest liberty and the greatest barbarism, after some possible modern fashion of elective tyranny, in the greatest moral, social, and political degradation of the world, from which it could be restored only by the *fiat* of the Creator.

4. That, consequently, it is the duty of all virtuous and patriotic men, and especially of ministers of the Gospel, as professed guides and conservators of society, to beware of this specious and wide-spreading sophistry, and jealous of the influence of its superficial, bustling, and intriguing propagators; — to inquire more carefully into its history as early introduced from pagan sources into the Christian schools, its gradual, but inconstant development in Church and State, in all periods, especially the present boasted philosophical period of Christendom, and the innumerable vanities and delusions to which it has given rise; — to criticize, by a Divine standard, the chimerical expectations it has awakened, both in

Church and State, of a perfected state of humanity by new organizations of society, upon its own professedly liberal ideas, while the influence of vital Christianity is continually diminishing; the faith of the primitive churches, and the puritan doctrines of the reformation are more extensively dishonored; a state of general social disintegration, confusion, and strife, is becoming more extensive and alarming; the materials for a perfect commonwealth are rapidly diminishing; a more individualized selfishness, and unscrupulous overreaching are well-nigh universal; a gloomy uncertainty reigns, scarcely relieved by the professions of new cliques and combinations that steam up from the decaying rubbish of the old; the best servants of Church and State are retiring to secret places, while noisy partisans, and insane agitators disgrace the posts which they had adorned; and "Men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth," because of the evidently increasing incapacity of society in general for self-government, or for appreciating and enjoying the blood-bought blessings of civil and religious liberty. And this obligation has peculiar force upon ministers of the Gospel, lest they be borne, more extensively and irrecoverably, upon the popular current of secularity, selfishness, and unbelief, and seduced to a more general adoption of merely human, political, rhetorical, philosophical,

fantastic, and, ultimately, formal and superstitious methods of performing their Divine mission, to the grief of all truly Christian men, the contempt of judicious and patriotic citizens, and the curse of Almighty God.

These corollaries, and many others which could not be drawn out, or even suggested, within the limits proper to this letter, follow, by logical necessity, from the premises and reasonings to which Presbyter here calls the attention of his brethren; and they cannot be controverted if those premises and reasonings are sustained. Yet they are not merely inferential, but admit of independent support, and have a reflex action to confirm the principles from which they naturally result. For they fall in with the fundamental idea of natural and revealed religion, as the supreme and authoritative arbiter and judge of affairs, in opposition to the conceits, notions, and opinions of men; with the natural laws of mind, and of language and interpretation, by which we ascertain the meaning of the Divine records; as of all other compositions; with the phenomena of physical nature which are open to the common observation of men; with the analogies of history and experience, our only safe lights next to the holy Scriptures; with the theology of the Bible, as it stands in the letter of the inspired volume, and is drawn out in the formulas and standards of the church, in its best

periods; with the first principles of ethics as contained in the decalogue, and Christ's new commandment; and with the existing manifestations of the Divine Providence throughout the world.

It is this comprehensive bearing of the question of slavery, that gives it so much greater consequence than is apt to be imagined by those whose instincts and impulses are permitted to govern their decisions. Every thing in the government of God is related to every other thing, and stands in its proper adjustment to all the parts of the general system. The shock that we communicate at a single point, vibrates through the universe. Its effect is traceable, for the present, by reason of our imperfect faculties, but a little way. But we hear from it again; and, perhaps, then, by the ruin which it causes at another extremity, or a disturbance at the centre. If God has judged slavery important in his scheme of providence, there is no principle of morals, no doctrine of religion, no interest of the State, no condition of the Church, present or prospective, that would not suffer, not from the correction of its abuses, but from its abolition, while the reasons of it continue. It could not cease before its natural period, without a derangement whose course and consequences could be calculated only by omniscience. It might hasten a general catastrophe of the nations. It might produce a wreck of all things. Our fond imaginations

and foolish hopes could not prevent or limit the destruction, and our subsequent regrets would be unavailing. If slavery be accounted wrong, yet this thought of its vast relations should sober us in discussion, and moderate our measures. If it present an open question, it should the more restrain us. If it be right, language could not describe the folly of its intemperate adversaries, the madness of its rash assailants. Let destruction come, if it must, on either side, whether for maintaining or subverting it, against the will of God, yet the heart of Christian men should be moved only to defer it, to shorten the days of vengeance, and to weep over the desolation.

Revolution may come, with its accumulated horrors of civil and servile war. It is likely to come, as things are tending. Fanaticism, as usual, may stir up a fury which will defy control. Whether such a remedy for abuses of government is right, it would exceed the design of these pages to discuss. The distinctions above taken between the Church and State would, however, suggest a method of discussion that might afford no little aid to a serious inquirer. But, whatever should be judged, on the ground of natural religion, it is evident that Christianity and its ministers are precluded from all such expedients for the social regeneration of mankind, and, specifically, from making slavery an occasion for the use of them. Paul, and all the Apostles have settled

that question for the church, under its supernatural dispensation of the Gospel, whatever may be true, or whatever necessary for the world still regulated only by natural religion, and having not citizenship in a more spiritual kingdom. The State, in distinction from the *ecclesia*, is and must be political, and human policy, without the Divine life of Christ, is and must be utilitarian and expedient; for the stream of social life can rise no higher than its fountain in the human soul. But Christians, and Christian ministers are supposed to be of another mould; and this it is of great consequence to observe, while, through the influence of a spurious philosophy, a mighty process of secularization is now going on, which is likely to bring the church and the world down to the same low level of merely human conceits, and human passions; and while human happiness, and not God's righteousness, is likely to be made the great end of life. A true Christianity is not so. *God's righteousness* is its foundation, and its top-stone; and though Paul himself, or an angel from heaven, should preach otherwise, they would be accursed. Christianity is, without doubt, the greatest of all builders, and has the most glorious of all cities. Yet it builds not with crude materials of earth; but with jaspers, and sapphires, and all manner of precious stones. It is the greatest of destroyers; but only by reaction, when it meets the greatest of all resistance, and

society strikes "against its wall of adamant, and is driven back." Christianity condescends to nothing but a Divine activity. It affects no secular policy, or fashion, or influence, or preëminence. It is not designed to thunder in the Capitol, to tower above the State, or figure in its ranks, or control by force whom it cannot assimilate by virtue. It revolves round its own centre, and flies not off in eccentric paths, to increase the perturbations and irregularities of the general system. Christianity cannot be identified with the State, nor can the two reciprocate and interchange offices without mutual decrepitude, and premature dissolution. When that union, as in apostate periods, and, as now, remarkably, takes place, the Scripture calls the unnatural product "a beast," and "a bottomless pit" is opened to receive it, — the same which is yawning to engulph the corrupt Church and State dynasties of the old world, and which it is the probation of this country to avoid; — which may God grant. Christianity cannot lay its head in Delilah's lap without being shorn of its strength, and losing its eyes, and grinding in the prison, to be dragged out for the mere sport of the uncircumcised. Its hair, meanwhile, might grow for another desperate struggle; but it could never resume its dignity, or recover its prerogatives. It might be powerful to bring down some temple of the idolaters, but to be itself buried

in its ruins. Samson died still a Hebrew, and a strong man; and he died in faith: but, nevertheless, he died like a fool. He should not have died at all. He should not have lost his hair.

Political agitations and revolutions are not for the church of God. Christ so taught us, by the most significant illustration, when he set it up, by his Spirit and his apostles, on the day of Pentecost, and then indicated the relations of Christianity to the social state. He had gathered, in the central city of the world, representatives from all its countries:— Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judeans, Cappadocians, Pontians, Asians, Phrygians, Pamphylians, Egyptians, Lybians, Cyreneans, Romans, Jews, Proselytes, Cretes, Arabians. Peter taught them,— the same whom Christ had cured of his political rashness by that sharp rebuke—"Put up thy sword into thy sheath: they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Three thousand were converted; and they returned to their respective countries, bound by no secret oaths, whispering no party shibboleths, and projecting no illuminated theories to reconstruct society upon a better model, but diffusing through it, everywhere, a better spirit. They went forth not to revolutionize, but to convert; not to burn the old habitations, bad though they were, and turn out the dwellers, promiscuously, into the pitiless storm, but to make them more tolerable, and

even gladsome, by the presence of the loving Christ. Those good men did what they could: and, for three centuries, the church, till a political philosophy corrupted it, constituted, under the persecuting protection of a heathen government, what Paul calls the "let," the hindrance to the introduction of "The man of sin"—The Church and State power—"That wicked"—which has been more injurious than Pagan Rome; for Gregory is worse than Cæsar. But even him, and all that is called Antichrist, Christ will himself "consume by the breath of his mouth, and destroy by the brightness of his coming." That work of judgment is his, and not for his disciples by ignorant conspiracies, social agitations, and headlong overturnings before the time. "Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord." It is not theirs to be citizen Christians, but Christian citizens; not to affect a kingdom on which Christianity shall stand, and be *supported*, but a kingdom that shall stand on Christianity. Our glorious corner-stone is not laid in London, Paris, Rome, St. Petersburg, Washington, but *Zion*. On that the church shall rest; while, to the dynasties of earth, if they accept it not, it will be 'a stumbling-stone, and a rock of offence.' They shall fall on it, and be broken; or 'it will fall on them, and grind them to powder.'

From the issues above presented, many will be likely to have their attention diverted, and others

will be more confused, by suggestions like the following: — "that slavery in *the abstract*, is nothing:" — "that our concern is not with the *principle* of slavery, but with slavery *as it is:*" — "that slavery, if carried on as Presbyter would have it, is no slavery at all:" — "that an infused Christianity would destroy it, and that Christ intended it should so come to its end."

To all these Presbyter replies; — that it is a strange turn which is now taken by those lively and philosophic persons who have, for so many years, busied themselves and the public with *the abstractions* of liberty, equality, fraternity, the rights of man, a Divine consciousness, a higher law, an inner light; and have opposed these abstractions to the principle and the system of slavery; who have kept the nation astir with the ceaseless din of their controversy, and almost armed one half of it against the other; — that it is a strange turn for them now to forswear *abstractions* and *principles*, and to plant themselves on *things as they are;* — it is strange that they should meekly affect to be no longer philosophers, but plain, practical men, their imaginations no longer fired with speculative ideas, but their hearts overflowing with humane affections; bound to no ethical, political, or reformatory theories, but simply intent on doing good; renouncing all fiction and romance, all sentiment and passion, all vaporing and declamation — the natural fruit of a stimulated and ambitious fancy — and

minded only to destroy slavery by the infusion of a Christian spirit: — that, however, it is eminently gratifying to see them, at length, so far recovered to a normal state of mind, and making such gentle acknowledgments and professions: — that to bring them to these more reasonable and Christian views, has been the leading object of Presbyter in both his letters: — that, if their present suggestions be not mere logical artifice and evasion, but a matter of sincere conviction, and if they will hold to them, consistently, in practice, then all dangerous agitation will be at an end, speculative discussion will cease from the pulpit, and the religious press, clerical haranguing from the platform, political action from the church, and partisan warfare from society in general. These and such like vanities will be succeeded by offices of Christian charity; a new type of philanthropy, and more consistent with godliness, will be revealed; the public mind will be prepared for more healthy discussion, and generous activity; a saving change will come over the body politic; slavery, *as it is*, will be succeeded by slavery, *as it ought to be*, through the inworking of a Christian spirit; and for such an annihilation of it all good Christians and honest patriots will unite in a general jubilee; for the millennium, in that respect, will have come.

Such a change in our philosophers would be the

more auspicious, because it would promise the only possible deliverance of the country from an approaching catastrophe. The war of *abstractions* has brought the nation almost to its crisis. The principle of liberty and equality has been arrayed against slavery, till our social edifice is shaken to its foundations; and ruin must ensue if the strife be carried on. For the principles involved are vital and essential. They are not sectional, political, prudential, financial, but ethical and theological. They pertain to the centre; and a strife at the great heart would, at length, draw in all the subordinate forces of society; and dissolution would be inevitable.

If, then, our fanciful philosophers are ready to hold abstractions as nothing, and to treat them accordingly, giving up all controversy in regard to *principles*, and attentive only to *facts*; that is — the way and manner in which slavery is carried on, — and to Christian methods of meliorating, improving, and thereby destroying it, with reference to the setting up of a perfect Christian state, — our country, without doubt, will soon become a spectacle to the world. There is, it is true, a sense in which slavery *as it is*; that is — apart from its principle, — is an *abstraction*, as a predicate taken from its subject is an *abstraction*, or as *clothes* are the *abstract* of a man; and, in that respect, it might be imagined that difficulties and disputes would occasionally arise. But such an

abstraction, not being merely notional and speculative, like liberty, equality, and fraternity, but a thing to be looked upon and handled, could be more easily disposed of, or shaped to existing exigencies, or be made conformable to better acknowledged standards, than elementary ideas, or mere fictions of the brain. It would not be so likely to intoxicate the imagination, or inflame the passions, or be made subservient to political views. *Principles*, whether right or wrong, are immutable. But fashions change; and nothing is more susceptible of the influence than clothes. The nation could not well be distracted on that account; for new fashions would set in before the parties could gird themselves for any deadly strife about the old; or the disputants might be diverted into a more friendly quarrel concerning their respective habiliments of war, and the fume would pass off in a campaign of tailoring diplomacy. Or, the offending party would see the advantage of making clothes after an improved pattern, and the aggrieved would have their complacency restored by the new costume. Even the old clothes would not be thought so offensive in the *abstract*, as they were in the *concrete*. The abuses of slavery would not make so great a figure, apart from its principles; or, if they did, they would be more willingly corrected. At the worst, a war of fashions is never prolonged or deadly. A better temper would grow, imperceptibly, on both sides.

They would come together, and their combined wisdom would find means of correcting unnecessary irregularities, or of repairing their injurious effects. Our philosophers in particular, then confining themselves to the thing *as it is*, and to the greater improvements that *would be*, would naturally lose their zeal in respect to matters beyond their sphere of observation and jurisdiction, belonging appropriately to their neighbors, and would busy themselves more with their own affairs. Their heated imagination being brought down to its natural proportion to their more sober faculties, all their powers would thenceforth be harmonized, and, in the state of healthful activity which would ensue, they would presently forget their ugly dreams, and make a better reckoning of realities. Three or four millions of slaves would not seem of so much greater consequence to the world than twenty millions of freemen; yet, being held in value in proportion to their quantity of being, or of merit, and consequently acted upon for the sake of bettering their condition, they would immediately feel the enlivening influence of such a revived Christian and patriotic spirit. The generous excitement would reach their lowliest cabins. It would increase their courage, constancy, and fidelity. It would strengthen their humane affections, alleviate their burdens, purify their pleasures, inspire their worship, awaken holier aspirations after an improved social state, and thus

produce the only *effectual*, and the only *possible* preparation for it. If our philosophers are sincere, and will be consistent, the nation will be saved.

Are they sincere? Will they be consistent? Will they abjure their abstractions and conceits, their speculations and theories, their personal invectives and partisan finesse, their fiery rhetoric and revolutionary agitation, and go out as missionaries preaching the Gospel to masters and slaves after the manner of Christ and his Apostles, and with reference to the same great ends? Will they substitute for their alleged spiritual illuminations, their new and improved lights, the old-fashioned and substantial verities of natural and revealed religion; and make society better, not by assailing its old foundations, but by infusing into all its disorganized departments, the restoring and conserving principle of a heavenly life? Will they contribute to introduce that perfect state — the object of their fond imaginings, — in which there shall be no need of punishments, restraints, and discipline, — not by theological rodomontade, ethical romancing, logical chicanery, literary artifice, political confusions, popular excitements, social contentions, personal animosities, and the overturning of society in general, all in subserviency to their Divine *idea* of — *liberty*, — but by the Word and the Spirit of God? Will they subordinate *humanity* to the *Godhead*, happiness to right-

eousness, rights to duties, imagination to judgment, instinct to reason, and all the faculties to the holy Scriptures? Will they consent that God should govern the world in his own way? Will they bear *witness* in the earth for *Him?* — Great is the problem of the future!

That problem, and all others whatsoever related to it, or dependent upon it, must be solved mainly by ministers of the Gospel. They are the constituted leaders of society in morals and religion. If they magnify their office, and teach not for doctrine the commandments of men, they will be holden in the Divine covenant, and conduct the host into the promised land. But, if, imprudently misled by a visionary philosophy, they make the Divine word subservient to speculative and romantic ideas, and the achievement of a secular and political salvation, they will find their graves, with the bewildered and idolatrous people, on the hither side of Jordan, with no prospect of a better resurrection. — May God preserve them. — And let an unworthy Presbyter be pardoned, if, in his honest zeal to "vindicate the ways of God to man," he has exceeded the bounds of a good discretion, or said aught to wound, unnecessarily, the feelings of his brethren. Fare ye well!